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REV. JOHN LOGAN,

F. R. S. Edinburgh,

One of the Ministers of Leith.

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SERMONS,

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN LOGAN, F. R. S. EDINBURGH,

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF LEITH.

INCLUDING A

COMPLETE DETAIL OF THE SERVICE

OF A

COMMUNION SUNDAY,

ACCORDING TO

THE USAGE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

The Sixth Edition.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY THOMAS TURNBULL, CANONGATE.

1807.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

THE following volume is the work of a Man of Genius; but as it is a Posthumous Publication, and was not prepared by the Author for the Press, the candid Public will make the proper allowances.

AMONG Mr LOGAN'S Papers were found a variety of PRAYERS, and of ADDRESSES to Communicants, at the Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. That these might not be lost to the Public, it was judged proper to give, from his Manuscripts, the whole Service of a Communion Sunday, in complete detail; in which these Compositions form a part; and are introduced, each in its place. This will, at the same time, serve as a memorial of the Form, according to which that Solemn Ordinance is generally administered, in the present times, in Scotland; and may not be unacceptable to those of the neighbouring Church, who have a desire to be acquainted with the modes of our Service and Worship upon that occasion.

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THE

LIFE

OF

THE AUTHOR.

TO trace the progress of the man of genius, bursting through the clouds which humble birth, and a low situation of life tend to throw over his first steps, till by his own native powers he counteracts the disadvantages of his original obscurity, and shines forth acknowledged by an admiring world—this is an interesting and a pleasing task—but if misfortune sheds a gloom on his career, while it heightens the interest, it mingles our pleasure with sensations of pity, which arrest our attention more closely to the incidents of his life, however trifling; and such are the feelings which the life of Logan are calculated to awaken.

John Logan was born at Soutra, in the parish of Fala, county of Mid-Lothian, in the year 1748. His father, George Logan, was then a farmer at that place; but afterwards removed to Gossford, the seat of the present Earl of Wemyss, in the county of East-Lothian. His mother, Janet Waterston, was daughter of John Waterston, who resided in the parish of Stowe. Both parents belonged to that class of the Scottish dissenters who call themselves Burgher-Seceders; and were equally distinguished by the unblemished rectitude of their conduct, the sincerity of their piety, and the benevolence of their hearts.

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They had two sons, of whom John was the younger. The care of the farm, in consequence of the father being killed by accident as he was returning from Edinburgh, devolved upon the elder brother, which, however, he soon quitted, and betook himself to the study of medicine. He afterwards went to America, as a surgeon, where he died about the year 1785.

John gave early proofs of that superiority of genius by which he was afterwards so remarkably distinguished; and his parents, with an alacrity that deserves imitation, fostered his love of learning, and resolved to educate him for the clerical profession.

Having received all the information and erudition which the parochial school could afford, he went to the university of Edinburgh. Where a friendship between Logan and Dr Robertson, (late of Dalmeny) commenced, which continued through life with undiminished affection, and uncontaminated with that jealousy which is too common among men of genius. Michael Bruce, whose literary career was soon closed, was then a student at the same university; and the similarity of their genius and pursuits soon produced an intimacy, which continued till the poet of Lochleven dropt prematurely into the tomb. After the death of Bruce, Logan engaged with alacrity in preparing the poems he had left for the press. And in 1770, he published "Poems on several occasions, by "Michael Bruce," to which he added an account of the Life and Character of the Author, and "some "Poems written by different authors." The friends of Logan and of Bruce are divided in their opinions concerning the share which the latter had in this miscellany.

After Logan had completed that course of theolo-

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gical learning which the laws of the Scottish church require of those who become candidates for her licence, he was employed by Mr Sinclair of Ulbster, in assisting the studies of his son, now Sir John Sinclair, Baronet; a situation in which he was treated with peculiar kindness, but in which he did not long remain. After undergoing the usual examination, and performing the exercises prescribed by the laws of the church, he obtained licence from the presbytery of Edinburgh to preach the gospel. The fame of his eloquence soon spread, and he received an unanimous call from the kirk-session and incorporations of South Leith, to become one of the ministers of that church and parish; and he was accordingly ordained in the year 1773. The duties of his ministerial office he discharged with steadiness and fidelity. But while he attended his sacred and important duties as a clergyman, he did not abandon the muses; he spent his leisure in the cultivation of polite literature, particularly poetry.

During the session of College 1779-80, he read a course of lectures on the Philosophy of History, in St Mary's Chapel, Edinburgh; an undertaking in which he was patronized by Principal Robertson, Dr Blair, and others eminent for their taste in literature, and their encouragement of genius. He read the same course of lectures during the session 1780-81, with such universal approbation as to be encouraged to offer himself as a candidate for the professorship of civil history in the university of Edinburgh. In this, however, it is much to be regretted, he was disappointed; as that chair, by a peculiarity for which it is difficult to account, had been always filled by one of the faculty of advocates. In 1781, he

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published the substance of that part of his prelections which related to ancient history, in one octavo volume, entitled, "*Elements of the Philosophy of History.*" It would appear this performance received some encouragement; for, in the following year, he published one of his lectures on the manners and government of Asia. In the same year he gave to the public a volume of poems, which were so favourably received, that a second edition was soon called for. Not only did he distinguish himself in the beaten tract of lyric and elegiac poetry, he also cultivated the favour of the tragic muse; and in 1783, produced the tragedy of Runnamede; which, however, was never acted (except once in Edinburgh) on account of certain references, which it was supposed to have to the politics of those times. But although it was never applauded in the theatre, yet it pleases in the closet, though unaccompanied with the magic charm of voice and gesture. Such disappointments could not fail to make a deep impression on his mind; and they accordingly increased that melancholy to which he was naturally subject: An effect which every friend to genius must lament, as it produced certain irregularities in conduct, rather incongruous with the sacredness of the ministerial character. His parishioners became irritated, and who, it seems, could not distinguish between transient deviations from the path of rectitude, and determined wickedness, were highly enraged; and persecuted, with relentless fury, the man who had laboured with assiduity for their good, and whose learning and talents had been devoted for their improvement. Logan, who foresaw the storm that was gathering around him, perceived that it would be inexpedient for him to re-

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main any longer among a people who so ill requited his labour; with a moderation which does him honour, he agreed to withdraw from his office; and Mr Dickson was appointed his assistant and successor.

After this he went to London, and was engaged in writing for the "English Review." He also wrote a pamphlet which attracted considerable notice, intitled "A Review of the Principal Charges against Mr Hastings." His health now began to decline; and his literary career, and multiplied sorrows, were terminated by his death, on the 25th of December 1788.

The death of Mr Logan was much lamented by his friends, to whom he was always warmly attached, and by whom he was sincerely beloved; the fury of his enemies seemed to have subsided, and they were willing to pay to his memory that respect which he looked for in vain while he lived. He was now, however, secure from the attacks of malice, and the shafts of envy; and to him the praise or blame of mortals had become of small moment.

By his will, he bequeathed the sum of six hundred pounds Sterling in small legacies to his friends; and appointed Dr Robertson and Dr Grant his executors, to whom he entrusted his manuscripts. In 1790, a volume of his Sermons was published, under the inspection of his friends, Dr Robertson, Dr Blair, and Dr Hardy. In the following year, a second volume was published, in which several of the discourses are not finished, either from the manuscript being incomplete, or not legible. The fourth edition of both volumes was published in 1800. Besides the works of Mr Logan, which we have mentioned in the course of our narrative, he left a variety of other papers

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of which his executor, Dr Robertson, gives the following account in a letter to Dr Anderson, dated Dalmeny, September 19. 1795.

"Those in verse consist of *Electra*, a tragedy; the *Wedding-day*, a tragedy, being a translation into blank verse of the Deserteur of Mercier; the *Carthaginian Heroine*, a tragedy, but of which there is only the first act finished; and about half-a-dozen of short lyric poems. Those in prose consist of about eight numbers of an intended periodical paper, called the Guardian: the subject of one of the numbers is a capital essay on the genius and writings of Addison. Besides these, I have also in my possession Mr Logan's MS. Lectures on the Roman History. His Lectures on Roman History begin with Romulus, and come down to the fall of the empire, and the establishment of the feudal system. In the small volume of poems, published under the title of "Poems by Michael Bruce," the following were composed by Logan: *Damon*, *Menalcas*, and *Melibœus; Pastoral Song*, to the tune of the "Yellow-hair'd Laddie;" *Eclogue* in the manner of Ossian; *Ode to a Fountain;* two *Danish Odes;* Chorus of "Anacreontic to a wasp;" the Tale of Levina, (278 lines) in the poem of Lochleven; *Ode to Paoli; Ode to the Cuckoo* *." It is to be regretted that Dr Robertson did not publish a complete edition of the works of Logan, including his MS. which, we are told by Dr Anderson, he had meditated some time before his death. It now remains only to speak of Logan's character as a Poet, a Historian, and Divine, and to appreciate the claims which he has to the notice and respect of posterity. As a Poet, simplicity, elegance, and taste, seem to be the

* Dr Anderson's Poets. Vol. XI. p. 1030.

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characteristic features of his composition: chaste, tender, pathetic, he is often beautiful, seldom sublime, and possesses more of fancy than of fire. His hymns are distinguished by a peculiar sweetness of versification and tenderness of expression. In tragic poetry he evidently struggles with a subject much beyond the grasp of his powers; in his attempting to be great, we perceive the overstrained efforts of a secondary mind, and are pained by observing the fruitless exertion. He excelled in the descriptive or the pathetic; but when he endeavoured to embody, to give a local habitation and a name to the terrific grandeur of ideal scenes, however the chastity and elegance of his versification please the ear, he seldom seizes the passions, or interests the feelings so forcibly, as to make us insensible to the blemishes of his plot, and the partial faults of its execution. In history, if we may judge from the acknowledged specimens which he has left, he was more fitted to excel. The Elements of the Philosophy of History, though merely an outline of his Lectures, impresses us with an high idea of his powers; and if, as is generally supposed, the "View of Ancient History," published in the name of Dr William Rutherford, was the composition of Logan—the substance of the Lectures he delivered: the happy application of moral and political science to the history of mankind—the philosophical accuracy of his investigation—the luminous arrangement, the elegant diction by which they are distinguished—must lead us to regret that a greater proportion of his attention was not directed to similar subjects, and confirm the opinion we have expressed of his ability. But as a Divine, he shone with pre-eminent lustre; warm and animated, he carries his readers along with him; he kindles the zeal, and awakens the devotion of the

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most languid and inattentive. In native eloquence he stands unrivalled among our pulpit Orators; perhaps the whole circle of English Theology affords no specimens of eloquence, equal to some passages in the Sermons of Logan. Sermons which have this additional recommendation, they were merely the *specimens of his ordinary preaching*, and not laboriously finished for the press.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

SERMON I

PSAL. xxvii. 4.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.

DAVID, the author of this psalm, is much celebrated in the sacred Scriptures. As a man, he was not without faults; but as a king, he shines with uncommon lustre. He distinguished himself in early youth, as the champion of his native land; in fighting the battles of Israel he became the hero of his age: and at last he ascended the throne, on which he sat with much splendour during many years. He was the founder of the Jewish monarchy. From being separate tribes he made the Jews a nation. Their judge in peace, as well as their leader in war, he secured by his councils what he had gained by his arms, and gave to Judea a name and a renown among the kingdoms of the East. To the bravery of a warrior, and the wisdom of a statesman, he added what in all ages has been no less admired,—the accomplishments of a poet, or bard. "The sweet Psalmist of Israel" consecrated his harp to the praises of the Lord, and composed to its sacred strains, that have ministered to the improvement and to the devotion of succeeding times, till this day.

Notwithstanding all his other engagements, he found time for the exercises of religion: notwithstanding all the pleasures and honours of a throne, he

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found his chief happiness in the house of the Lord. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I "seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the "Lord all the days of my life." Whenever his favourite subject presents itself, he takes fire, and speaks of it, not only with zeal, but with transport. "How "amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My "soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of "the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the "living God."

It becomes then a subject worthy of our attention, to inquire, *What there is* in the public institutions of religion, to have rendered them an object of so great importance to the king of Israel? This will appear, if we consider their influence on men, with respect to their religious capacity; with respect to their moral character; with respect to their political state; and with respect to their domestic life.

In the *first* place, let us consider the influence of religious institutions upon men, with respect to their *religious capacity.*

There are many qualities which we share in common with the inferior animals. In the acuteness of the external senses, some of them excel our species. They have a reason of their own; they make approaches to human intelligence, and are led by an instinct of nature to associate with one another. They have also their virtues, and exhibit such examples of affection, of industry, and of courage, as give lessons to mankind. But in all their actions they discover no sense of Deity, and no traces of religion. It was reserved to be the glory of man, that he alone should be admitted into the presence of his Creator, and be rendered capable of knowing and adoring the perfections of the Almighty. As Piety is the distinguishing mark of the human race, a tendency to the exercise thereof is in some degree natural to the mind. When we look up to heaven, and behold the sun shining in glory, or the moon and the stars walking in brightness, untaught nature prompts us to adore him,

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that made them, to bow down and worship in the temple not made with hands. When we are surrounded by dangers on every side, and overwhelmed with deep affliction, by the law of our nature we tend to some superior Being for safety and relief: or when we are surprised with a sudden flow of unexpected prosperity, spontaneously we lift up our eyes and hands to heaven, to pour forth the grateful effusions of the heart to our unseen Benefactor.

As there are principles, then, in human nature, which incline men to religion, and principles also which incline them to society, it would not have been extraordinary, if the combined influence of the religious and associating principles had been so strong as to have prompted men to have assembled in public, for the purposes of devotion, although no law had been given to that end. But it was not left to this. Among all the nations of the world, the public interested itself in the cause; the legislative authority interposed its sanction, and kings and lawgivers encouraged the propensity of the people to religion. It required no profound wisdom to foresee the manifold advantages that the public worship of a Deity would introduce among men.—Accordingly, temples were everywhere built, sacred ceremonies were instituted, an order of men was appointed to officiate in holy things, and certain days were set apart for the people to join in the celebration of divine worship. Indeed, as to the objects, and the manner of worship, little care was taken. The magistrate gave his authority to the current belief, though ever so absurd and ridiculous, and established that form of religion which the people were best disposed to receive. It was thought sufficient, if by public and solemn acts of piety, a sense of Deity, and feelings of religion, could be impressed, and frequently renewed in the minds of men. But in some nations this practice, so highly beneficial to mankind, was enjoined by an authority superior to that of human governors. God himself, in the system of laws which he delivered to

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his ancient people, hallowed the seventh day, and appointed other festivals in which the people should assemble together in order to join in the services of the sanctuary. In what concerns the celebration of the Sabbath, Christianity confirms the Mosaic law. Our Saviour, whose practice ought to be a rule of life to Christians, attended upon the public worship in the Jewish synagogues; and the Apostles followed his example, till by their labours in the ministry, they had gathered together in one place, a sufficient number of converts to form a church. Then they constituted regular assemblies of Christians, they ordained proper persons to preside in the public worship, and, both by their precept and example, recommended a constant attendance on these meetings of the faithful.

That there must be an established religion in every state, is a principle in which not only Christians, but infidels, have been agreed. In order that the public religion may be productive of any good effects, it is necessary that it make a deep impression upon the minds of the people. But if it were not for our assembling together on the Lord's day, for public worship, that form of Christianity which is established in this country would perhaps take too feeble a hold of the mind, to produce its proper effects. The Christian religion is very different from those systems of superstition which prevailed in the Pagan world. The Heathen religion had attractions for every feeling of the human frame. It contained every thing that could strike the senses, or please the imaginations of men. All the apparatus of false religion, which at once amuses and engages the mind, was exhibited: ceremonies, pompous festivals, costly sacrifices, were continually passing before the eyes of the worshipper. In the majesty of the temple, and the splendour of the worship, the Deity seemed to be present. Ancient superstition introduced the fine arts into her train, called the powers of genius to her aid, and employed the painter and the poet to hold out her charms to the world.

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Very different was that religion of which Jesus Christ was the author. When the Son of God descended, he appeared not like the idols of the nations. The Christian religion is pure, spiritual, divine. It is the religion of the mind and the heart; the worship of God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth. There is nothing here but the simplicity of truth and the majesty of reason to persuade the world. Man, however, is not a pure intelligence, and reason is not the only attribute of his nature. Were it not, therefore, for the mode of communication by discourse in public assemblies, Christianity in its simplest form, could never be a popular religion. It might employ the leizure of philosophic men; it might operate its effect upon the few who are given to inquiry; but it never could engage the generality of mankind. They who have not considered the subject, cannot possibly conceive the astonishing difference that there is between written and spoken language; between the dead letter that appears to the eye, and the living voice that comes to the heart. The same discourse that in a popular assembly would raise the passions of the audience to the highest pitch; send it abroad in print, and it will often have no effect at all. Add to these, that it is to the meetings of the faithful, that the promise of the divine presence is made. In the gates of Zion, God delights to dwell; and when his disciples are gathered together, Jesus has promised to be in the midst of them. True piety indeed is not confined to the sanctuary. High is the pleasure, and great the benefit, of private devotion. But sure I am, that they who have entered into the spirit, and tasted the pleasures of devotion in secret, will not be thereby prevented from approaching to God in the ordinances of public worship. Society heightens every feeling, and improves every delight. All that charms the eye, or the ear, or the imagination, or the heart, is attended with double pleasure, when we share it in the company of others. In the presence of striking and exemplary piety, the careless worshipper will

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become devout, and the devout will become fervent. A holy emulation will rise in the bosoms of the faithful: the ardour will spread from breast to breast, and the passions of one, inflame the passions of all. May I not appeal to your own experience, and ask, When you have been in the spirit on the Lord's day, when the word of life was spoken from the heart to the heart, have you not felt that there was a divinity in virtue? have you not found yourselves as if translated from earth to heaven, and experienced the emotion of mind which the Patriarch felt, when he awoke from his dream, and cried out in rapture, "Surely the Lord "is in this place! This is none other than the house "of God, and this is the gate of heaven?"

Secondly, Let us view the effect of religious institutions upon men, with regard to their *moral character*.

Whatever brings men together, and connects them in society, has a tendency to civilize and improve them. Especially when they assemble together for such important purposes as the worship of a Deity, this will be the effect. There is something in the very idea of drawing nigh to God, that inspires virtue. When men, accustomed to meet together as busy and as social creatures, assemble at stated times as rational and immortal beings, a sense of propriety will prompt them to act up to that high character. When the sons of God come to present themselves before the Lord, whatever is displeasing to God, and hostile to men, will vanish from their mind. The connection between such exercises of piety, and the practice of virtue, is nearer and more intimate than superficial reasoners are apt to imagine. There are indeed pretences to religion, without any virtue, as there are pretences to virtue without any religion; but whoever in reality possesses the fear of God, will be thereby determined to keep his commandments. It must be obvious, at first view, that the sense of a supreme Being, the inspector of human affairs, the patron of virtue, the avenger of sin, and the rewarder of righteousness, has a powerful tendency to strengthen mo-

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ral obligation, to annex a new sanction to the laws, and to inspire purity into the manners of a people.

By the operation of such a principle, open violence will be restrained, and secret enmity will be checked. Society will assume a happier form, the insolence of the oppressor will be humbled, and the wild passions of the licentious be subdued. What the Scripture calls, "the power of the world to come," is felt strongly through every corner of this world. Heaven improves the earth; and the life which is to come, is a source of happiness to the life which now is. There are, indeed, I acknowledge, to the honour of the human kind, there are persons in the world who feel that the possession of good dispositions is their best reward; who would follow goodness for its own sake, and do their duty, because it is their duty, although there were neither rewards nor punishments to come. But I know as well, that the world is not composed of such persons. Men in general are governed by their passions, their interest, the prevailing bias of their minds; and whenever their passions, their interest, or the bias of their mind, stand in one scale, and their duty in the other, it is very evident where the balance will incline. To such persons you might declaim for ever to no purpose, on the beauty of virtue, and the harmony of a well-governed mind: they hear you not; they are deaf to the voice of the moral charmer; nothing less than "Thus saith the "Lord," will influence their conduct. The unjust judge in the parable represents and characterizes the great body of mankind; if they fear not God, neither will they regard men.

Thus, if the public institutions of religion were laid aside, private virtue would not long remain behind. Men in general have no principle of moral conduct but religion, and if that were taken away, they would work all impurity with greediness, whenever they could withdraw from the public eye. Human laws would often be of little avail, without a sense of divine legislation; and the sanctions of men have lit-

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tle force, unless they were enforced by the authority of God. There would then be no security for the public peace; the mutual confidence between man and man would be destroyed; the bond which keeps society together would be broken; oaths would become mere words of course, and an appeal to the Great God of Heaven no more regarded than if he were an image of stone. Human life would be thrown into confusion, the safety of mankind would be endangered, and the moral world totter to its ruin, if such a pillar were to fall. And what is it that maintains and spreads religious principles in the world? What is it that keeps alive on the minds of the people the fear of God and the belief of his providence? It is the public institutions of religion; it is the observance of the Lord's day; it is our assembling together in this place, for the celebration of divine worship. The people, in general, have no religious principles, and no rule of life, but what they learn here; and if these churches were once shut up, the hand of the civil magistrate would soon force them open, in order to reclaim the criminals that would thus be let loose upon the world.

In the *third* place, let us view the effect of religious institutions upon men, with regard to their *political state*.

The political systems that take place in the world, the facility with which the many are governed by the few, is one of the most wonderful things in the history of man. That mankind in all ages, and in all countries, should allow a few of their number to divide this globe among them; to appropriate to themselves the possessions, distinctions, and honours, and leave nothing to the majority but burdens to bear, if we had not beheld it from the first, would have appeared one of the most astonishing of all events. Would it be at all surprising to hear a man struck with a sense of this state of things, complain thus—"Is nature unequal in the care of her children? A "mother to some, and stepmother to others? Has she "appointed me to labour in the sweet of my brow,

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" and another to riot in the fruit of my labours? No. " The fault is not in nature. She has no favourites. " She gives to all her sons an equal right to inherit " the earth. The fault is in them who tamely bend " their necks to the yoke; who kneel and kiss the " rod which the haughty lord waves over their heads. " It never surely was the will of heaven, that the " worthy should be scorned by the vile, and the " brave be trampled upon by the coward. Cannot I " then find a band of men as valiant and as de- " termined as myself, to rectify these caprices of for- " tune, to vindicate the rights of nature, and restore " mankind to their original inheritance? By doing " violence at first, this usurpation on nature was " made; and by a similar violence, nature requires " that her reign be restored." What is it that prevents such a spirit as I have been now describing, from frequently breaking out? What prevents bloodshed and devastation, and all the evils of war? What prevents the world from being turned upside down? —Nothing so much as the influence of religious principles upon the minds of men. Christianity gives honour to civil government, as being the ordinance of God; and enjoins subjection to the laws, under its own awful sanctions.

And not only by particular precepts, but by its secret and less visible influence, it prepares the minds of men for submission to lawful authority. When we meet together in this place, under the sanction of law, and under the protection of the civil magistrate, we are put in mind of our relation to the state, and of our duty to the higher powers. *Fear God*, and *honour the king*, have more than a local connection in Scripture.* Obedience to spiritual authority paves the way for subjection to the civil power. Hence wise Legislators have, even on this account, favoured the progress of religion: hence those who have attempted innovations in government, applied, in the first place, to the ministers of religion, and endea-

* See 1 Pet. ii. 17.

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voured to gain the pulpit on their side. Julian, known by the name of the Apostate, the most formidable enemy the Christians ever had, was so sensible of the influence, and of the effects of preaching to the people, that he appointed a similar institution among the heathens.

" My son, fear thou the Lord and the king," (said the wisest of mankind), " and meddle not with them " that are given to change." In confirmation, we may observe, that men, characterized as given to change, have either, from infidelity, not attended upon ordinances, or, from enthusiasm, been above them! For, who have been innovators and disturbers? who have been the authors of seditions and rebellions? who have been the enemies of order and civil government, in many an age?—a mixture of atheists and fanatics; two classes of men, who, though seemingly opposite, have been found in close bonds of union.

In the *fourth* and *last* place, we have to consider the influence of religious institutions upon men with respect to *domestic life.*

It is chiefly on account of their domestic situation, that we can pronounce men happy or miserable. Here the pleasures are enjoyed which sweeten life; here the pains are felt which embitter our days. No uneasiness abroad will sit heavy on a man, when the pleasing reflection rises in his mind, that he has happiness at home: No enjoyment from without will give real and lasting satisfaction, when he knows that he has a curse in his own house.

It is no small advantage attending the institutions of divine worship, that they minister to the happiness of domestic life. A new bond will be added to the conjugal union, when those whom it connects walk to the House of God in company, take sweet counsel with one another, and set out jointly in the way that leads to life. Watered by the dews of Heaven, which fall here, the olive-plants will flourish round your table. What sacred sensations will fill the bosom of a parent, when, viewing his family sitting at the feet of Jesus, he says, in the fullness of a

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grateful heart, " Lord, behold me, and the children " whom thou hast given me !"

There is a beauty also, when the rich and the poor, when the high and the low, who seldom meet together on other occasions, assemble here in one place, one great family, in the presence of their common Lord, when they are stripped of every adventitious circumstance, and where virtue makes the only distinction among them. It is the image of those golden times when society began ; it is the image of the state which is to come, when God shall be all in all.

Such are the effects of religious institutions upon men, with respect to their religious capacity, their moral character, their political state, and their domestic life.

Whoever, therefore, habitually absents himself from attending on public ordinances, has to answer for it to his God,—to his neighbours,—to his country,—and to his family. He partakes with other men in their sins ; he associates with the enemies of mankind ; and does what in him lies, to undermine the basis on which the order and happiness of civil society is built. He teaches the false swearer to take the name of God in vain ; he directs the midnight robber to his neighbour's house ; and he delivers into the hand of the assassin, a dagger to shed innocent blood.

But, blessed be God ! that, corrupted as the world is, there are not wanting instances of exemplary piety, in every station of life ; not only in the middle, the lower, and the higher, but in the highest of all. While piety shines, as it now does, from the Throne ; while it has the beam of Majesty to adorn it ; let none of the subjects fail in copying the pattern : and, while we meet together in this place, let us remember, that many who have worshipped, in times past, within these walls, are now in the Higher House, in the Church of the First-born, in the Assembly of Angels, and in that Temple where the beatific presence of the Lord displays his glory, in a manner which hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.

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SERMON II.

ROM. xii. 11.

——Fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

THE manners of mankind are perpetually varying. Two nations differ not more from one another, than the same nation differs from itself, at different periods of society. This change of customs and manners has given rise to two opinions, both of them generally received, and both of them founded on mistake. These are, that we are always improving upon our ancestors in art and in science, and always degenerating from them in religion and morals. When we talk of any work of ingenuity or of industry, composed or performed by our forefathers, from the highest liberal science, to the lowest mechanic art, if we allow it any praise at all, our panegyric runs in this style: "It is very well, for the time in which it was done." On the other hand, we always allow our ancestors the preference in virtue. For these five thousand years past, the philosophers and moralists of every nation have extolled the times of antiquity, and decried the age in which they lived, as the worst that ever was known. "These wicked times,"—"This degene-" rate age," are phrases that have rung in the public ear almost since the general deluge. The ages of antiquity are always ages of gold; the present always an age of iron.

The origin of these opinions I take to be this: As customs and manners are perpetually fluctuating, the reigning mode is always reckoned the best, because

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they have no other standard but fashion. But fashion is not the standard of morals. The hand of the Almighty hath written the moral law, the standard of virtue, upon the living tablets of every human heart. Here then the standard is fixed and eternal. Accordingly, as quite a different set of virtues and vices prevail in one age, from what prevail in another; as we are naturally disposed to bury the faults of our forefathers in oblivion; as we insensibly contract a veneration for whatever is great in antiquity; hence arises the opinion, that the virtues of a former age are greater than those of a following one. We think we degenerate from our fathers, because we differ from them. But were I to pronounce of the times in which we live, I would say, that the present age is not inferior in virtue to the past. We have improved upon our ancestors in humanity, charity, and benevolence; we have exchanged the rage and rancour of animals of prey, for the meek and gentle spirit of the dove. The gall of asps is transformed into the milk of human kindness. Great and enormous crimes are less frequent than they have been; we are better members of society, better neighbours, better friends than our ancestors were. People of different opinions and sects in religion, who some hundred years ago would have been putting one another to death, now live together in amity and peace.

Would to God I could carry on my panegyric, and add, that we are more religious and devout than our ancestors were; that our zeal for the honour of God, and the interests of religion, shines with a brighter lustre, and burns with a purer flame. But alas! my brethren, I must here change my strain. Your own eyes, your own hearts, will tell you the dismal truth. Is it not a deplorable fact, that instead of being fervent in spirit to serve the Lord, an indifference about religion almost universally prevails? The very face of seriousness is banished from society, and were it not for this day, on which we assemble together to

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worship the God of our fathers, the very form of godliness would be exterminated from the earth.

To induce you to the practice of devotion, it is proposed, in the *first* place, to illustrate the importance and the advantage of serving the Lord; and in the *second* place, to explain and to inforce, with a few arguments, the duty of serving the Lord with fervency of spirit.

In the *first* place, let us consider the importance and the advantage of serving the Lord.

We are urged to the practice of some virtues, by our strong sense of their inviolable obligation; we are allured to the love of others, by the high approbation of their native beauty, which arises in every well-disposed mind; we are engaged to the performance of others, by our experience of their utility and influence upon the public good. Piety is equally enforced in all these respects. Its obligation is indispensable; its beauty is supreme, and its utility is universal. It is not so much a single virtue, as a constellation of virtues. Here reverence, gratitude, faith, hope, love, concentre their rays, and shine with united glory. Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure, are honest, or of good report; if there be any merit, any praise in human action, piety comprehends the whole. There is not a disposition of the mind which is more noble in itself, or is attended with greater pleasure than piety. It is accompanied with such inward satisfaction, that the duty is sufficiently rewarded by the performance; and it hath such true grandeur in it, that when duly performed, it exalts us to a state but little lower than the angels. The most illiterate man, under the impressions of true devotion, and in the immediate acts of divine worship, contracts a greatness of mind that raises him above his equals. Thereby, says an admired ancient, we build a nobler temple to the Deity than creation can present.

Piety is adapted to the notions of happiness and chief good which all men entertain, although these notions were as various in themselves as the theories of philosophers have been about their object. If we

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are actuated by the mild and gentle affections, lovers of nature, willing to retire from the bustle of the world, and to steal through the vale of life with as little noise, and as much peace as possible, religion sanctifies our choice, and doubles all the joys of life with the peace of heaven. Are we lovers of society, delighting to enlarge the sphere of our acquaintance in the world, and to cultivate universal friendship with all ranks and degrees of men? Here too, religion befriends us, as it unites all men under one common interest, that of being probationers for eternity. Are we ambitious of fame and honour among men? This is indeed the universal passion. Nothing more distinguishes the nature of man, than this restless desire of rising above his fellows, of becoming famous, and acquiring a name. But it does not lie in the way of every one to rise in the world, by being advanced to honour and distinction, and commanding the applause of attending multitudes: Fame unbars the gates of her temple but to a chosen few; the candidate will infallibly meet with many a disappointment, and many a downfal, in climbing the steep ascent; but the paths of religion, that lead to glory, honour, and immortality, are ever open and safe; by piety we already enjoy a reputation among the just, and the approbation of our own hearts, and have the certain expectation of that immortal honour which cometh from God only, who writes our name in the book of life. Hither let the man of the world turn, that he may find durable riches, more to be desired than gold and all earthly possessions. Here the man of pleasure may find a perpetual fund of enjoyment, in drinking of that stream which proceeds from the river of life; a stream whose fountain never fails, which has no sediment at bottom, and which runs for ever unmingled with the waters of bitterness.

Piety is the foundation of virtue and morality. True devotion strengthens our obligations to a holy life, and superadds a new motive to every social and civil duty. Upon an impartial observation of mankind, it

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will be found, that those men who are the most conscientious in the public and private exercises of divine worship, will be most diligent in performing the duties they owe to their neighbour, and in observing the rules of morality. Our holy religion lays us under strong obligations to duty; the spirit of Christianity dwelling in the heart, must of necessity inspire it with an ardent desire to perform whatever things are virtuous and praise-worthy; and the example of Jesus Christ, which the true Christian sets continually before his eyes, will engage him by all the laws of love, to walk as he also walked, who, according even to the testimony of his enemies, "did all things well." On the other hand, impiety and immorality naturally go together, as cause and effect. Who is it that is altogether corrupt, and a worker of iniquity? It is the fool, who hath said in his heart, There is no God. When we read of the unjust judge in the Gospel, who feared not God, we naturally infer that he regarded not man. Under this particular, we may likewise take notice, that serving the Lord with sincere piety, is the most successful method of becoming publicly useful in the world. Man, fallen as he certainly is, is still a benevolent being. Formed for society, he delights in the exercise of his social qualities, he aspires to be eminently useful in the station in which he is placed, and is in his proper element, when he is dispensing happiness around him. The sympathetic emotions that rise in the bosom at the sight of an object in distress, the smile that wakens on the cheek, the tear that starts spontaneous from the eye, at the representation of scenes of human joy or sorrow, are indisputable indications of the benevolence of our nature. But the low station of many, checks the benevolence of their hearts, and circumscribes it to a narrow sphere. Few have it in their power to become useful to their country, by contriving or effectuating public-spirited designs; few have it in their power to save their country from the miseries of war, by being its shield in the day of battle; few can act as the

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instruments of Providence, in bringing about national happiness. But all of us can be pious, and by serving the Lord with fervency of spirit, can become universally useful to our country and to the world. By piety, like the Prophets of old, we can shield our country from the wrath of Heaven; we can interest Omnipotence on its side, and even derive blessings to ages unborn. A good man is the guardian angel of his country.

I shall only add on this head, that by serving the Lord here, we have an earnest and anticipation of the happiness of the heavenly state. It is a pleasant reflection, and well worthy of our most serious thought, that we are now entering upon a course of life that will be our employment through eternity. As man is a progressive being, gradually tending to perfection, it is a law of his nature, that he should endeavour to act beforehand, the part to which he is destined in a higher state of being. The child, from his earliest years, anticipates in sport the employment of maturer age, loves to imitate the actions of men, and is pleased with the name. We are all of us children, with respect to our future existence; and should it not be as natural for him who is born from above, to act over the exercises and enjoyments of that state of being to which he is advancing? Piety is the beginning of heaven in the mind: Here the sun faintly beams, as in the dubious twilight; there he shines forth in full meridian glory. What an inestimable privilege then is this, which God hath put into our power? A life sacred to piety, and to the observance of true and undefiled religion, introduces us beforehand into the world to come, and gives us an acquaintance with the state and society of the angels and blessed spirits who dwell in light.

I come now to the *second* thing proposed, which was, to explain that fervour of spirit so requisite in the exercises of devotion, and enforce it with a few arguments.

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By fervour of spirit, in general, is meant an uncommon application of mind in the performance of any thing, a warmth bordering upon transport, that moves every spring of the heart, and carries all before it, to gain its end. So that by a fervency of spirit in serving the Lord, must be understood, an ardent and active desire of loving the Lord, of worshipping him in sincerity, and obeying his commands with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. It consists not in a few transient fits and starts of natural devotion, when we are in jeopardy, without help of man; neither is it a wild blaze of religious passion, that flashes and vanishes; much less shall it be profaned by confounding it with those furies, *Enthusiasm* and *Superstition*, who would drench a country with innocent blood, under pretence of serving the Lord. "Cursed be their anger, "for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel. O "my soul, enter not thou into their secret."

True fervour of spirit proceedeth from above. It is a beam from the Father of lights, pure and benign, which at once enlightens and warms the mind. It is a ray from the Sun of Righteousness, bright even at the beginning, and which shineth more and more, unto the perfect day. It is a temper wrought into the heart by the Holy Spirit, compounded of love to God, and of zeal for his honour, attended with charity to man.

This fervour of mind, in its full extent, is one of the brightest ornaments of the Christian. It enters into the heart, and engages the whole man on the side of devotion; it gives a double measure of force and alacrity to that religion which before was sincere. In a word, it is to the spiritual life, what health is to the natural; it makes that spirited and cheerful which otherwise would only breathe and move. Conscious that religion is his grand concern, the fervent Christian will set about the duties of it with suitable ardour and intenseness of mind. The passions and affections which God hath given man, as the springs

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of action, will in him be exerted to their noblest purpose, to inspire him with alacrity and cheerfulness in the ways of the Lord. He will be in pain till he has performed his duties of devotion, and labours of love, holding nothing too dear, which will procure to him that robe of holiness, which is beautiful in the eyes of Heaven. He feels in his heart all the devout affections and desires so passionately described by the holy Psalmist, which we know not whether to admire most as beautiful strains of poetry, or raptures of devotion. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, "so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul "thirsteth for God, yea, the living God: when shall "I come and appear before God? How amiable are thy "tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, "fainteth, for the courts of the Lord. For a day in "thy courts is better than a thousand. The desire "of my soul is to thee, O God, and to the remem-"brance of thy name. With my soul have I desired "thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me "will I seek thee early. My soul waiteth for thee, "O Lord, more than they that watch for the morn-"ing; yea, more than they that watch for the morn-"ing."

To engage us more effectually to the performance of this part of our duty, let us consider the general obligations we lie under, as rational creatures, to serve the Lord with fervency of spirit, and then the particular obligations that arise from Christianity.

And, in the *first* place, as the Almighty is the Creator of the world, and the Father of the human race, he is likewise their Preserver, and the Author of order and harmony in the universe.

In his Providence, he takes us, the children of men, into his particular tuition, in giving us, from his immediate hand, all things requisite for our subsistence, well-being, and delight, in this world, our well ordered habitation; in making nature spontaneously unlock to us her hidden stores; in causing the wide creation, one way or other, administer to our plea-

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sures, as if heaven and earth contended which should be most liberal of their favours to happy man; and, in fine, admitting us, above all the other inhabitants of our earth, into the plan of his creation, and making us spectators of that beauty, original and supreme, the image of himself, which he hath poured forth over all his works.

But when we consider his particular Providence, with respect to every one of us, our obligations will be infinitely heightened. Here we discern the finger of God. His goodness lent a favourable ear to all our feeble cries and complaints, when we were upon the breast; he guarded us from a thousand dangers and diseases which hung over our heads, and cut off more than one half of our equals in age; he hath led us, as it were, by the hand throngh the various stages of life, affording us many deliverances, and many tokens of his loving-kindness, which only ourselves and Heaven were privy to; and when all things in the world seemed to combine against us, he was a friend that never failed. Seeing then he upholds our existence, and is the parent of so many mercies, has he not, as our Supreme Benefactor, a title to the service of our whole lives, and to all the fervour of our spirits?

This will appear still more, in the *next* place, when we consider the superior obligations which we are laid under by Christianity. While many nations are sitting in darkness, and the shadow of death, on us hath the Sun of Righteousness arisen, in full glory. We are let into the mystery kept hid from ages. We have seen the Deity, in human form, descending upon earth, to teach the benighted nations the knowledge of salvation; to set a pattern of goodness and perfection for the world to imitate; and, by expiating the guilt of sin upon the cross, to finish our redemption. We have now a new and living way opened into the Heaven of Heavens, by the blood of Jesus. Life and immortality are brought to light, and promised to all who sincerely believe and obey the gospel. So that we may now rejoice with the Poet

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of Israel,—"As the heaven is high above the earth, "so great is the mercy of the Lord towards us; for "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he "removed from us all our iniquities: He redeemeth "our lives from destruction, and crowneth us with "loving kindness and tender mercies."

When we are obliged to any of our fellow-creatures for an important favour, what pleasure is it to a generous heart, to be able to make the least return! If our benefactor be above us in his station in life, if he bestowed the favour without any solicitation on our part, and promises still to continue our friend, shall we not take every occasion of shewing that we are not ungrateful, and search for opportunity of serving him, as for hid treasure? What thanks, what praises, what services, shall we not then render to our Supreme Benefactor, who had translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his Son; who delivered up his Son unto the death for us, and with him freely gives us all things!

We have abundance of ardour and zeal in our temporal concerns. We rise early, and sit up late: we deny ourselves the pleasures and comforts of society: we forego our native country, and all the dear connections of early life: we traverse the whole terraqueous globe, expose ourselves to the mercy of winds and waves, and bear alternately the extremities of heat and cold: we breathe in the regions of infection and of death,—to amass a few pieces of shining dust, whose acquisition costs us such sore trouble, and whose possession gives us so little happiness. Almighty God! shall we be thus fervent and zealous in every temporal, in every trivial concern, and remain cold and dead unto thee!—If thus we continue, my brethren, the very heathens, issuing forth from their regions of darkness, will set up a tribunal and call us before them: "The men of Nineveh shall rise "up in judgment with us, and shall condemn us; be-"cause they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and "behold a greater than Jonas is here! The Queen of

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"the South shall rise up in judgment with us, and "shall condemn us; for she came from the uttermost "parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, "and behold a greater than Solomon is here!"— "Verily, it shall be more tolerable for the land of So- "dom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgment, than "for our city."

Do ye consider, my brethren, the dignity and importance of that religion, to which your attachment is required? Do ye reflect, that this is the masterpiece of infinite wisdom; that here the Almighty made bare his holy arm, and put forth all his strength? The introduction of this religion was the object of all the dispensations of the Deity upon earth. This is the centre in which terminates every line in the great circle of Providence. If one nation was victorious, and another put under the yoke; if war was commissioned to ravage and lay desolate the earth, or peace to make the joyful inhabitants sing beneath the vine; if kings were crowned, or were dethroned; if empires rose or fell, all was preparatory and subservient to this grand event. The monarchies which prevailed in the world, whether Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, or Roman, were erected as introductory to the Messiah, whose kingdom was to be without bounds, and whose reign was to be without end. That great image which the Monarch of the east beheld in his dream, whose head was of gold, whose breast was of silver, whose thighs were of brass, and whose feet were of iron, was set up by Providence, to prepare the way for the Stone which was cut out without hands, which was destined to smite the image, become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. All events, whether prosperous or adverse, whether malignant or benign, have co-operated towards the advancement of our religion. Saints have established it by their lives: martyrs have confirmed it by their death: hypocrites have added strength to it by their dissimulation: tyrants have purified it by their persecutions: infidels have corroborated it by their opposition: the ar-

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rows of its enemies have served for its protection: the resistance which it has met with, from the combined wit, and genius, and malice of mankind, have brought forth those illustrious and immortal defences which establish its truth upon the basis of demonstration.

Shall we not, then, reckon ourselves eternally indebted to the infinite goodness of God, and stir up all that is within us to bless his holy name?—saying, in the language of true fervour of spirit, "We will "praise thee, O God! we will praise thee with our "whole heart! our lives shall be thy sacrifice! we "will adore thee in death, and through eternity!"

God, from his throne in heaven, doth not behold an object more noble, and more worthy of his view, than a pious man; a man who, conscious of the dignity and immortality of his nature, employs himself with fervour and zeal, in those devout exercises which assimilate him to the Divinity; who, measuring time by his improvements in devotion and virtue, never loses a day. He is the favourite of Heaven. The arm of the Almighty is stretched out in his behalf. The Lord loves him, and keeps him as the apple of his eye; he gives his angels charge concerning him, to preserve him in all his ways, lest at any time he should dash his foot against a stone. He delights to speak his praise in the assemblies of his saints and angels above: he writes his name in the book of his remembrance, and gives him the honourable title of the friend of God. He makes all things work together for his good in this world, and in the dark vale of death, opens his eyes to discern the dawning of heavenly day. In fine, he holds his very ashes sacred; and, raising him up at the last day, carries him to his throne in heaven above, with the glorious company of the redeemed, to be made partaker of his own happiness.

These are thy palms, O piety! thine is the kingdom prepared above; thine the power with God and with man; and thine the crown of glory that fadeth not away!

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SERMON III.

ECCLES. xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

WHEN Solomon, in early youth, had ascended the throne of Israel, the God of his fathers appeared to him in a dream. The Almighty was graciously pleased to condescend thus to visit his creature. He put in his offer all the pleasures of the world, and desired him to ask, and he should receive; to wish, and he should enjoy. The young king possessed a wisdom beyond his years, and a greatness above his crown. He did not ask to have his palace filled with the beauties of the east, to have his treasury stored with the gold of Ophir, or to wear the laurel of victory over the nations. He asked a greater boon than all these. "Give thy servant, O Lord," replied the wise prince, "Give thy servant wisdom and understanding." What he then made the object of his own choice, he recommends to you under another name, in the words of the text: "Remember now thy Creator "in the days of thy youth."

This is the last chapter of the works of Solomon; and these words may be regarded as his dying advice to the young. The philosophers of antiquity, who held out the lamp of wisdom to the heathen world, gave the same advice to their followers. But between them and Solomon, there is this remarkable difference; they, from the obscure retirement of the schools, declaimed against pleasures which they had never tasted,

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and affected to despise honours to which they never had it in their power to ascend. But Solomon, a great and powerful prince, in the pleasurable time of life, had in his own person tried the experiment. He made the tour of the sensual world. He went in quest of happiness through all the scenes of life. He extended his search over the broad and flowery way, as well as in the narrow path, as it should seem by a particular permission of Providence, to save the pains of future inquirers. Solomon acted the libertine upon a principle of inquiry. The result of his researches was, that all unlawful pursuits began with vanity, and ended in vexation of spirit, and that the true happiness of man consisted in that understanding which teacheth us to depart from evil, and in that wisdom which instructeth us to fear the Lord.

It is common in Scripture, to express all the acts of devotion and virtue by some part, or principle of religion; sometimes by wisdom and understanding; at other times, by faith, love, the fear of God, walking with God, and many other phrases; all of which express the same meaning, and denote the whole economy of a religious life. So that remembering our Creator in the days of our youth, implies an early, and an entire dedication of ourselves to the service of God.

In further discoursing upon these words, I shall enforce the exhortation in the text, and endeavour to persuade you to remember your Creator in the days of your youth, from the peculiar suitableness of religion to the early period of life. And, in the *first* place, let me exhort you now in the days of youth, to remember your Creator, from your being as yet uncorrupted by the world.

Although both Scripture and experience testify that man is fallen, and that our nature is corrupted, yet it is equally certain, that our earliest passions are on the side of virtue, and that the good seed springs before the tares. Malace and envy are yet strangers to your bosom. Covetousness, that root of evil, hath not yet sprung up in your heart; the selfish, the wrathful,

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and the licentious passions, have not yet obtained dominion over you. The modesty of nature, the great guardian of virtue, is not seduced from its post. You would blush even in secret, to do a deed of dishonesty and shame. High sentiments of honour and of probity expand the soul. The colour comes into the cheek at the smallest apprehension of blame; the ready lightning kindles in the eye at the least appearance of treachery and falsehood. Hence says our Lord to his followers,—Unless you become as a child; unless you assume the candour, the innocence, and the purity of children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Therefore, whilst you are yet an offering fit for heaven, present yourselves at his altar, devote yourselves to his service. How beautiful and becoming does it appear for young persons, newly arrived in this city of God, to remember the end for which they were sent into it, and to devote to their Maker's service, the first and the best of their days? When they are in the prime of youth and of health, when the mind is untainted with actual guilt, and alive to every generous impression, to consecrate to religion the vernal flower of life? The virgin innocence of the mind, is a sacrifice more acceptable to the Almighty, than if we should come before him with the cattle upon a thousand hills, and with ten thousand rivers of oil. If there be joy in heaven over a great and aged sinner that repenteth, how pleasing a spectacle will it be to God, to angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, to behold a person in the critical season of life, acquit himself gloriously, and, despising the allurements, the deceitful, and transitory pleasures of sin, choose for himself that better part which shall never be taken away!

Dare then, O young man, to remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; have the courage to be good betimes. Beware of falling into the usual snare of the inexperienced; beware of thinking that you have time enough to be religious, and, for that reason, may defer the work of your salvation to maturer age; when, as

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you foolishly imagine, seriousness and sanctity will come of their own accord. In answer to this, let me ask you, my friends, How often have you observed time reform any one? Did time reform Saul? Did time reform Ahab? Did time reform Jezebel? On the contrary, did they not grow bolder in wickedness? You generally, indeed, observe a greater decency in maturer age. The ebullition of youth is then spent, its turbulence is over; but, too often, I am afraid, the wild passions have only given place to an external sobriety, whilst the heart is as far from God, and as carnal as ever. If you suspect this to be a hasty decision, examine what passes in the world. Do you not observe great part of men in the decline of life, as earthly-minded as before? The passion for pleasure has indeed abated, but the love of lucre, the most sordid of all passions, hath come into its place. If such persons have any regret for their past life, it is only because it *is past*. Even then, they look with envy upon the gay and the flourishing state of the young. With what joy and triumph do they talk over the excesses of their early days, and seem to renew their age in the contemplation of their youthful follies? Alas, my friends, Is not God the Lord of all your time? Is there one of your days which doth not pertain to him? Why would you then take the flower of life, and make it an offering to the enemy of souls? Is your time too long, to be all employed in the service of God? Is the prime of your days too precious to be devoted to heaven? And will you only reserve to your Maker the refuse of life; the leavings of the world and the flesh? If you would speak it out, the language of your heart is this: That whilst you are good for any thing, you will mind the world and its pleasures; that you will crown yourselves with rose-buds, before they are withered, and let no flower of the spring pass away; but if at any time the world shall forsake you, if your passion for pleasure shall have left you, you will then seek the comforts of religion; any part of your time, you think, is good enough for God; you will apply

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yourselves to the work of your salvation, when you are fit for nothing else; and when you cannot make a better of it, you will seek the kingdom of heaven.

Is it thus that ye requite the Lord, O people, foolish and unjust? Is this your gratitude to your Benefactor? Is this your love to your Father? Is this your kindness to your Friend? Whilst he now calls upon you in the sweetest language of Heaven, "My son, "give me thy heart," ought it not to be the natural movement of your heart, to answer with the good man of old, "With my soul have I desired thee in the "night; with my spirit within me, will I seek thee "early:"—"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and "there is none in all the earth whom I desire besides "thee."

In the *second* place, Let me exhort you to early piety, from the consideration of those evils which await you in your future days.

Now is your golden age. When the morning of life rejoices over your head, every thing around you puts on a smiling appearance. All nature wears a face of beauty, and is animated with a spirit of joy. You walk up and down in a new world; you crop the unblown flower, and drink the untasted spring. Full of spirit, and high in hope, you set out on the journey of life: visions of bliss present themselves to view; dreams of joy, with sweet delusion, amuse the vacant mind. You listen and accord to the song of hope, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much "more abundant." But ah! my friends, the flattering scene will not last. The spell is quickly broken, and the enchantment soon over. How hideous will life appear, when experience takes off the mask, and discovers the sad reality! Now thou hast no weariness to clog thy waking hours, and no care to disturb thy repose. But know, child of the earth, that thou art born to trouble, and that care, through every subsequent path of life, will haunt thee like a ghost. Health now sparkles in thine eye, the blood flows pure in thy veins, and thy spirits are gay as the

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morning; but, alas! the time will come when diseases, a numerous and a direful train, will assail thy life; the time will come, when pale and ghastly, and stretched on a bed, "chastened with pain, and the "multitude of thy bones with strong pain, thou wilt "be ready to choose strangling and death rather than "life."

You are now happy in your earthly companions. Friendship, which in the world is a feeble sentiment, with you is a strong passion. But shift the scene for a few years, and behold the man of thy right hand become unto thee as an alien. Behold the friend of thy youth, who was one with thine own soul, striving to supplant thee, and laying snares for thy ruin! I mention not these things, my friends, to make you miserable before the time. God forbid that I should anticipate the evil day, unless I could arm you against it. Now remember your Creator, consecrate to him the early period of your days, and the light of his countenance will shine upon you through life. Amid all the changes of this fluctuating scene you have a Friend that never fails. Then let the tempest beat, and the floods descend, you are safe and happy under the shelter of the Rock of ages.

Thirdly, the season of youth devoted to piety, will yield you a comfortable old age.

When the fire and spirit of youth are decayed; when sober age retires from the noise and bustle of a busy world, and loves to spend in peace the tranquil Sabbath of life, what joy will it afford to be able to look back with pleasure on the actions of other years! Worn out and weary of his pilgrimage, the traveller now entertains himself by recalling the times that are past, and recollecting the scenes of his early days. In particular, he now loves to recal the period of childhood and of youth, when he wandered up and down, a stranger to care and sorrow, and passed his days in innocence. Often does the fond idea recur; often the pleasant period return. It will add much, my friends, it will add much to the pleasures of the re-

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flection, if you have it in your power to recal to mind that your early days were not only innocent, but useful, and devoted to the service of your Creator. To look back on a life, no season of which was spent in vain; to number up the days, the months, and the years, spent in the service of God, will be inward rapture, only to be felt. This will cause the evening of life to smile, and make your departure like a setting sun.

I shall conclude with one consideration, which I hope will have weight, and that is, if you seek God now in the days of youth, you are certain of success. Go out in the morning of youth, and you are sure to gather the manna of everlasting life. God himself will bend from his throne, and teach your spirits to approach unto him. They who seek him early shall find him, and shall be guarded from evil on his holy mountain.

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SERMON IV.

COLOSS. iv. 5.

——Redeeming the time.

AMONG those who have their time most at their own disposal, there prevails a maxim very different from that which is recommended in the text. The maxim of the world is, to spend time in idleness and folly, or, to speak in their own language, "to "kill time," by dissipation and amusement. Life, which appears so short upon the whole, is nevertheless so long in particular parts, that vast numbers of men are overstocked with its days and hours; their time hangs heavy on their hands; they know not how to employ it, or what to make of themselves. As they have no fund of entertainment within, and for that reason, no happiness at home, they naturally look out for it abroad. Hence every pastime is greedily sought after, that can banish thought, and save them from their own company. Hence places of public entertainment are frequented, parties of pleasure are formed, plans of dissipation are concerted, and amusement, frivolous amusement, becomes the serious occupation of life. Only look around you into the world! Observe what policy and contrivance are continually put in practice by men, for pre-engaging every day in the week for one idleness or another; for doing nothing, or worse than nothing, and that with so much ingenuity and forecast, as scarce to leave an hour upon their hands to reproach them.

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Such, my brethren, is the life of what is called the *world*, a repetition of the same childish conceptions, a perpetual round of the same trifling amusements. If you had been sent on earth to play the fool; if your pilgrimage through life were merely a jaunt of pleasure; it would be cruel and injurious to awaken you from the delusion. But as you profess to be Christians, and believe this life to be a state of moral discipline and probation for the next, it will be proper and seasonable to warn you of the folly of such a course, and to point out a nobler and a happier path, where at once you may see the world, and may adorn it; where at once you may improve your time, and enjoy life.

In order to this, I shall, in the *first* place, give you some directions for redeeming, or improving the time; and, in the *second* place, set before you the obligations to the practice of this duty.

We begin with directions for redeeming the time. In the *first* place, treasure up in your memory a store of useful knowledge, as a proper foundation of employment to the mind.

It has been the complaint of discontented men in all ages, that life is a scene of dulness, not worth a wise man's care, where the same things come over and over like a tale that is told, which, however entertaining it may appear when it is new, yet, by frequent repetition, at last becomes tedious and insipid. The consequence of which has been, that many, viewing the picture in this disagreeable light, have been inclined to throw of all serious concern about their duty, to give themselves up to habits of indolence and languor, and to make no other use of their time, but to study how to trifle it away. True it is, indeed, that the days of many have thus been spent in vain; that their life has been a barren circle, within which they have been enchanted, going round and round, ever in motion, but never making any advances. But although many have made life a dull round of insignificant actions, yet no man had ever occasion to make it so. It is in-

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deed so to the brutes, who soon arrive at that pitch of perfection which is allotted to their natures, where they must stop short without a possibility of going farther. Sense, which is their highest power, moves in a narrow sphere; its objects are few in number, and gross in kind, and therefore not only come more quickly round, but also grow more insipid at every revolution.

But man is endowed with nobler faculties, and is presented with nobler objects whereon to exercise and employ them.—The contemplation of all divine truth to engage his understanding; the beauties of the natural and moral world to attract and captivate his affections: the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, manifested in the works of Creation, of Providence, and of Redemption, to exalt his admiration, and call forth all his praise. What employment can be more worthy of a rational being, or better adapted to the faculties of an immortal spirit, than thus to search out the order, the beauty, and the benevolence of nature; to trace the Everlasting in his works, and to mark the impression of his creating hand, yet recent on a beautiful world? Or if we turn our eyes towards the moral system, to observe a higher order of things, and a greater exertion of Divinity, in adjusting the plan of providence, in bringing light from darkness, and good from evil, in causing the most unconnected and contrary events co-operate to one great end, and making all to issue in the general good. Here is a noble path for a rational creature to travel in. Whilst day unto day thus teaches wisdom, night unto night will increase pleasure. The man who is thus trained up to the admiration of the works of God, and who has tasted the spirit of these sublime enjoyments, will not complain of the insignificance and languor of life. These studies will afford an occupation at all hours. They will make your own thoughts an entertainment to you, and open a fountain of happiness at home. They will diffuse somewhat of heaven over the mind; they will introduce you beforehand into

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the society of angels and blessed spirits above, and already prepare you to bear a part in that beautiful hymn of heaven: "Great and marvellous are thy "works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are all "thy ways, thou King of Saints."

Secondly, Have some end in view; some object to employ the mind, and call forth its latent powers.

In devising, or in executing a plan; in engaging in the whirl of active life, the soul seems to unfold its being, and to enjoy itself. Man is not like the soil on which he lives, which spends its powers in exercise, and requires repose, in order to recruit its wasted strength, and prepare it for new exertions. Activity is an essential attribute of mind. Its faculties exist only when they are exercised; it gains a new accession of strength from every new exertion, and the greater acquisitions it makes, it is enabled to make still greater. It is not a brook formed by the shower; it is a living fountain, which is for ever flowing, and yet for ever full. This will account for an observation that we have often occasion to make in life, that none have so little leisure as those who are entirely idle; that none complain so much of the want of time as those who have nothing to do. The fact is, they want that energy of soul which is requisite to every exertion, and that habit of activity which applies to every thing. Indolence unmans the faculties; unpairs and debilitates the whole intellectual system. Those who, under its influence, become a kind of perpetual sleepers, degrade themselves from the honours of their nature, and are dead while they live. A habit of activity is a most valuable acquisition. He who is possessed of it, is fit for all events, and may be happy in every situation. This habit is only to be acquired by pursuing some great object that may agitate the mind. Think not that your labour may be spent in vain. Nothing is in vain that rouses the soul: nothing in vain that keeps the etherial fire alive and glowing. The prospect of something coming forward; the pleasure and the pride which the mind takes in

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its own action, beget insensibly that habit of industry which will abide through life.

Thirdly, Set apart fixed and stated hours for the important duties of life.

It is the misfortune of great part of men, that they have no fixed plan of acting. They live *extempore*. They act at random. They are always led by instantaneous impulse, and are driven to and fro as inclination varies. Their life rolls on through a course of misspent time, and unconnected years, and appears upon review, like the path of a cloud in the air, which leaves no trace behind it. It was the custom of the great Alfred, one of the English kings, to divide the day into three parts, which he measured by the burning of tapers. One part he employed in the cares of the government; another part he dedicated to the cultivation of the liberal arts; the third he devoted to religion. It would be happy for you, my brethren, if, in this respect, you would imitate such an illustrious example. Let, at least, one part of your time be devoted to the service of God. When the morning ascends from the east, let it be your first care to offer up your earliest thoughts as incense to heaven; to add your praises to the hymns and hosannahs of the angels in light, and spirits of just men made perfect. When the shades of the night fall around you, let it be your constant care to implore the pardoning mercy of God for the errors of the past day, and to commit yourselves to the protection of His Providence who slumbers not nor sleeps. In particular, let this day, which is sacred to the memory of a Saviour's resurrection from the dead; which is a memorial of the full accomplishment of our redemption; let this day be set apart for holy contemplation on the wonders of redeeming love, on the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of the love of Jesus to our race, which passeth all understanding; which prompted him to forego the glories of his divine nature for a time, to take upon him the robe of humanity, to lead a life of sorrows upon earth, and to suffer

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a cruel, and ignominious, and an accursed death. Let us contemplate this amiable and divine love, till we are changed into the same image, and feel within ourselves an earnest and anticipation of that everlasting Sabbath of joy which is reserved for the righteous in the world to come, when time shall be no more.

In the *fourth* place, endeavour to distinguish your days by some good deed.

As those who are intent to amass a fortune, attend to small sums; in like manner, if you would wish to improve your time, you must take care not to lose a day. Many are the ways, and frequent the occasions, which daily present themselves, of adding to your true happiness, of improving your natures, and promoting the interests of society. You have all the world before you where to act, and the whole of human life as a theatre of virtue. Through the assistance of divine grace, conquer the excess of passion, correct some irregular desire, and obtain a victory over the vices that war against the soul. Let your goodness extend to society, and spread over the land, like the light of the morning. Can there be any employment so agreeable to a benevolent mind, and so congenial to the spirit of Christianity, as to assuage the boisterous passions, and reconcile the jarring interests of men; to open the eye which prejudice has shut; to charm down the spirit of party, and to unite all your neighbours in one great family of love? Is not the employment god-like: is not the joy divine, to brighten up the face that was overcast with sadness; to wipe the tears from the cheek of sorrow; to turn the voice of mourning into the notes of joy; to make misery and woe vanish before us like darkness before the sun; to refresh with showers of blessings the dry and barren land wherein no water is, and, co-operating with a beneficent Providence, to watch for the happiness of the world? Where is there any one so destitute of the gifts of grace, of nature, and of fortune, as to have no mite to throw into the public treasury? He who cannot pretend to enlighten or re-

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form the world, may instruct his ignorant, or comfort his afflicted neighbour: he who cannot communicate instruction, may give alms. If even these are not in your power, the gate of heaven is ever open; the throne of grace is ever accessible; and by your intercession with God, society may reap more benefit, than from the bounty of the opulent, or the labours of the learned. It was thus that Job improved his time, as we learn from his affecting complaint, when he reviewed the days of his prosperity: "O "that I were as in months past, as in the days when "God preserved me; as in the days of my youth, "when the candle of the Lord shined upon my head, "when the Almighty was yet with me, when my "children were about me; when the ear heard me, "then it blessed me; when the eye saw me, it gave "witness to me; because I delivered the poor that "cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help "him. I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the "lame: I was a father to the poor, and the cause "which I knew not, I searched out. The stranger "did not lodge in the street; I opened my doors to "the traveller. The loins of the naked blessed me, "and were warmed with the fleeces of my flock. The "blessing of him that was ready to perish came up-"on me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for "joy."

In the *last* place, accustom yourselves to frequent self-examination.

Call yourselves to an account at the close of the day. Inquire what you have been doing; whether you have lost a day, or redeemed the time? Have you learned any useful truth? treasure it up in your heart, as a valuable acquisition; make it a principle of action, and bring it into life. Have you done a good deed? then enjoy the self-approving hour, and give thanks unto God for the pleasures of virtue, and the testimony of a good conscience. Have you been led astray by temptation, and overtaken in a fault? repent sincerely of your past transgression; implore

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the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and resolve, through divine grace, to be more guarded in the time to come. Did we, my brethren, thus make a study of a holy life; were we as much in earnest about improving the soul in piety and virtue, as we are about many trifling concerns, to what high degrees of sanctity might we ascend! How pleasant would it be at the close of any period of time, to look back on a life, no season of which was spent in vain; to number up the days, the months, the years, that are marked with good deeds; to behold our youth, our manhood, and our age, as so many stages in our journey to the land of Emanuel? This would inspire us with that peace of God which passeth all understanding. This would cheer the traveller in the decline of his days. His evening would be bright and pleasant, and his sun go down in glory. Life thus spent, would make us triumph in death. Time thus improved, would make us rejoice through all eternity.

I have thus given you some directions for the proper improvement of time.—The second thing proposed, was to set before you the obligations to the practice of this duty; which I shall do by considering, in the *first* place, your nature as men, and, in the *second* place, your expectations as Christians.

In the *first* place, Let us consider our nature as men.

It is a study full of instruction to the curious or the pious mind, to contemplate the appearances in the universe, and trace the laws by which it is governed. All nature is busy and active. Something is ever coming forward in the creation; in the moral world, as well as in the natural, there is a design going on. The great purpose of nature in our system is to diffuse existence; to multiply all the forms of matter and classes of being. Every element is stored with inhabitants. Even the loneliest desart is populous, and putrefaction is pregnant with life. Worlds are inclosed in worlds, and systems of being going on, that escape the eye of sense.

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Such is the plan of Providence in this inferior world. The order established at the first of time is still advancing. The divine Spirit, who at the beginning moved upon the face of the deep, and turned a chaos into a beautiful world, still continues to move, inform, and actuate the great machine. Nothing in nature is at rest; all is alive, all is in motion in the great system of God. Thou too, O man! are appointed to action. The love of occupation is strongly implanted in thy nature. One way or another, thou must be always employed. Woe to the man who by his own folly is doomed to bear the pains and penalties of idleness. Rest is the void which mind abhors. An idle man is the most miserable of all the creatures of God. He falls upon a thousand schemes to fill up his hour, and rather than want employment, is contented to lie upon the torture of the mind, while the cards are shuffling, or the die is depending. The glory of our nature is founded upon exertions of activity. From the want of them, those in the more affluent stations of life, whose fortune is made at their birth, so often fail in attaining to the higher improvements and honours of their nature. Have you not, on the other hand, seen men, when business roused them from their usual indolence, when great occasion called them forth, discover a spirit to which they were strangers before, and display to the world abilities and virtues which seemed to be born with the occasion? While there are so many splendid objects to allure the mind, why trust your character to be evolved by accident? Why leave your glory in the power of fortune?

This activity is not only the source of our excellence, but also gives rise to our greatest enjoyments. Even the lower class of enjoyments, animal pleasures, are not only consistent with a life of activity, but also derive from it additional sweets. Hours of leisure, suppose hours of employment; they alone will relish the feast, who have felt the fatigues of the chace. But mere animal pleasures are not of themselves objects

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for a wise or a good man. Unless they are under the direction of taste; unless they have the accompaniments of elegance and grace; unless they promote friendship and social joy; unless they come at proper intervals, and have the additional heightening of being a relief from business, they soon pall upon the appetite, and disgust by repetition. Has sensuality a charm when thy friend is in danger, or thy country calls to arms? Who listens to the voice of the viol, when the trumpet sounds the alarm of battle? When the mind is struck with the grand and the sublime of human life, it disdains inferior things, and, kindling with the occasion, rejoices to put forth all its strength. Obstacles in the way only give additional ardour to the pursuit; and the prize appears then the most tempting to the view, when the ascent is arduous, and when the path is marked with blood. Hence that life is chosen, where incentives to action abound; hence serious engagements are the preferable objects of pursuit; hence the most animating occasions of life are calls to danger and hardship, not invitations to safety and ease; and hence man himself, in his highest excellence, is found to pine in the lap of repose, and to exult in the midst of alarms that seem to threaten his being. All the faculties of his frame engage him to action: the higher powers of the soul, as well as the softer feelings of the heart; wisdom and magnanimity, as well as pity and tenderness, carry a manifest reference to the arduous career which he has to run, the difficulties with which he is destined to struggle, and the sorrows he is appointed to bear. Happiness to him is an exertion of soul. They know not what they say, who, cry out, "Let us build tabernacles of rest." They mistake very much the nature of man, and go in quest of felicity to no purpose, who seek for it in what are called the enjoyments of life, who seek for it in a termination of labour, and a period of repose. It is not in the calm scene; it is in the tempest; it is in the whirlwind; it is in the thunder that this Genius resides. When once you have dis-

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covered the bias of the mind; when once you have recognized your path in life; when once you have found out the object of the soul, you will bend to it alone; like an eagle when he has tasted the blood of his prey, who disdains the objects of his former pursuit, and follows on in his path through the heavens.

Thus have I set before you your obligations as men, to make a right use of life, and have shewed you, from the principles of nature alone, without having recourse to Christianity, that the excellency and the happiness of man consists in a virtuous course of action, and in making a proper improvement of time. Let us now, in the *second* place, take in the considerations suggested by the Christian religion, and see what new obligations arise from it, to urge us to redeem the time.

It is the doctrine of revelation, then, that the present life is a state of probation for the life to come; that we are now training up for an everlasting existence; and that, according to our works here, we shall, be judged in a future world. According, therefore, as you now sow, hereafter you shall reap. The time is now passing that decides your fate for ever. The hours are at this instant on the wing, upon which eternity depends. In this view, let me exhort you to look back upon your past life. Call your former hours to an account. Ask them what report they have carried to Heaven. Is there any thing in your life, to distinguish it from mere existence? Do you discern any thing but shadows in that mirror which remembrance holds up? Is the book of memory one vast blank, or blotted all over? If this be the case,—and I am afraid it *is* the case with a great part of men,—*what better* are *ye* than the animals of the field or the forest? Like you they sleep and they wake; like you they eat and they drink; like you they perform the various functions of nature. Alas! my brethren, did Almighty God create you after his own image, that you might sink that image to the resemblance of a beast? For, what have you done since you came into being, to distinguish yourselves from the brutes that perish? have

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you glorified God in all your actions? Have you made your calling and election sure, by a lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by repentance from dead works, and by universal purity of heart and life? Have you enriched your mind with the treasures of wisdom? Have you adorned your life with the beauties of holiness? Have you laid many deeds of piety and charity as a good foundation against the time to come? Unless you have done these things, you have done nothing. You have been blanks in the universe. You are as if you had never been. You have been fast asleep; nor has your sleep been the less sound, that you have dreamed you were awake.

I now call upon you to arise, or be for ever fallen. It is now high time to awake. Almighty God now calls upon you to finish the work which he hath given you to do. Glory, and honour, and immortality are set before you. Up then and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee. With such views of your duty, and upon these principles of action, you will never join in the apology which some make for themselves, that the general tenor of their life is innocent, and that they have at least the negative merit to do no harm. Perhaps this account may be true; but let me ask such persons, have you ever considered the parable of the master who called his servants to account? He delivered talents to each of them, according as he saw fit, with this charge, "Occupy till I come." The servant who received the one talent, was negligent and slothful. He wrapt up his talent in a napkin, and hid it in the earth. He thought he did well, if he secured the capital till his Lord's return. But the master received the talent with indignation. He cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness, and condemned him to weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. The poor wretch was neither a thief nor a murderer. He had not wasted his Lord's goods. He had your plea,—he had done no harm. But he was found guilty of idleness and sloth; he received his sentence, and was condemned to punishment. That

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which is the ground of your security, could not save him from condemnation.

But, in good earnest, do you no harm? Is it no harm to wander from the cradle to the grave, in a labyrinth of amusements, either vain or childish? Is it no harm to waste in dissipation and expensive pleasure, that wealth which might have saved an honest family from beggary and want? Is it no harm to squander in one continued round of vanity and folly, those precious hours on which your future happiness depends? If there be harm in human actions, *this* is harm. It is a criminal negligence which will turn the scale of your eternal doom.

To you, my younger friends, this duty recommends itself under the most interesting claims. You are now in that period, when time can be improved to the best advantage. With you, every hour of life is precious. The misimprovement of youthful days is more than the loss of time. It were of little consequence to throw away a few days from your life; but along with these,—you cut off the substantial improvements, the real joys of maturer age. Figure to yourselves the loss which the year would sustain, if the spring were taken away;—such a loss you sustain. No tears, nor lamentations, nor bitter upbraidings, will ever recal that golden period. The star sets, to rise no more; the flood rolls away, never to return.

Your own experience, my aged brethren, will, urge the instant necessity of redeeming the time. Consider the fate that awaits you soon. A few steps will bring you to the threshold of that house which is appointed for all living. Man that is born of a woman, is of few days. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he flieth as a shadow, and continueth not. By the unalterable law of nature, all things here hasten to an end. An irresistable rapidity hurries every thing to the abyss of eternity; to that awful abyss, to which all things go, and from which nothing returns. The great drama of life is perpetually going on. Age succeeds to age, and generation to

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generation. Not long ago, our fathers trod the path which their fathers had trodden before them; we have come into their room, and now supply their places. In a little time we must resign to another race, who in their turn also shall pass away, and give place to a new generation. The race of men, saith a Jewish writer, is like the leaves of the trees. They come forth in the spring, and clothe the wood with robes of green. In autumn they wither; they fall; the winter wind scatters them on the earth. Another race comes in the season, and clothes the forest again.

Consider the world, my friends, as you saw it at first, and as you see it now. You have marked vicissitude and alteration in all human affairs. You have seen changes in almost every department of life. You have seen new ministers at the court, new judges on the bench, and new priests at the altar of the Lord. You have seen different kings upon the throne. You have seen peace and war, and war and peace again. How many of your equals in age have you survived? How many younger than you have you carried to the grave? Year after year hath made a *blank* in the number of your friends. Your own country hath insensibly become a *strange* land, and a *new* world hath risen around you, before you perceived that the old had passed away. The same fate that hath taken away your friends, awaits you. Even now the decree is gone forth. The king of terrors hath received his commission, and is now on his way. If you have misemployed your time, that talent which God hath put into your hand; if your life is marked with guilt or folly, how will you answer to your own heart at that awful hour? For, previous to the general doom, Almighty God hath appointed *a day of judgment* in the *breast* of every man. The *last* hour is ordained to pass sentence on all the rest. The actions of your former life, will there meet you again. How will you then answer at the bar of your own heart, when the collected crimes of a lengthened life, at *one view*, shall *flash* upon the mind; when the *ghosts* of your depart-

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ed hours, of those hours which you have *murdered*, shall rise up in terrible array, and look you in the face?—What would you then give for that time which you now throw away? What would the wretch who lies on a bed of agony, extended and groaning, who feels in his heart the poisoned arrow of death; who, looking back on his past life, turns aside from the view; who, looking forward to futurity, discerns no beam of hope to break that utter darkness which overwhelms him; what would he then give for those hours which you now despise, to make his peace with Heaven, and fit him for his passage into the world unknown? Remember, my friends, that this is no imaginary case; it is a case which may soon be your own. Be wise, therefore, while wisdom can avail, and save yourselves from the agony of repenting in bitterness of soul, when all repentance may be in vain.

To sum up all; my friends, the time is short. We are as guests in a strange land, who tarry but one night. We wander up and down in a place of graves. We read the epitaphs upon the tombs of the deceased. We shed a few tears over the ashes of the dead; and, in a little time, we need from our surviving friends the tears we paid to the memory of our friends departed.

Time is precious. The time is now passing that fixes our fate for ever. The hours are, at this instant, on the wing, which carry along with them your eternal happiness or eternal misery.

Time is irrecoverable. The clock is wound up once for all; the hand is advancing, and, in a little time, it strikes your last hour.

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SERMON V.

PSALM iv. 4.

Stand in awe,—

WHEN the Patriarch Jacob departed from his father's house, and entered on that state of pilgrimage, which only terminated with his life, he lighted on a certain place, where he tarried all the night. Agreeably to the simplicity of the ancient world, he laid himself down to rest upon the open plain; without any pillow but a stone of the field; and without any covering but the curtains of heaven. A stranger he was to the elegance and luxury of after times, but he enjoyed pleasures of a higher kind. The God of his fathers was with him. In the patriarchal ages, before a public revelation was given to the world, the Deity frequently appeared to holy men in dreams, and visions of the night. Accordingly, Jacob, in his dream, beheld a ladder set upon the earth, the top of it reaching unto the heavens, and upon it the angels of God ascending and descending: and behold! the Lord stood above, and said, "I am "the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the "God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee "will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall "be as the dust of the earth; thou shalt spread abroad "to the east, and to the west; to the south, and to the "north; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the "families of the earth be blessed."

Did the Patriarch awake in a rapture of joy, when he had been thus so highly favoured of the Lord? You shall hear: "And Jacob awakened out of his

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"sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, "and I knew it not: and he was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but "the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Though he had ascended in the visions of God, and beheld scenes of glory which few are admitted to see; though he had received the most gracious promises of personal safety, of prosperous increase to his descendants, and of the Messiah who was to spring from his race, nevertheless, an impression of reverence and awe was the last which remained upon his mind.

In like manner, my friends, although you have the near prospect of commemorating the most joyful event which signalizes the annals of time, yet, if at the approaching solemnity God shall be in this place, you will experience that state of mind which the Patriarch was in when he awoke from his dream, and an impression of seriousness and awe will keep its hold of your heart. There is a degree of reverence and holy fear which ever attends religion. Even when God manifests his mercy, it is, that he may be feared. Hence we are called to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with reverence. All objects make an impression upon the mind, correspondent to their own nature. A beautiful object calls forth pleasing ideas, and excites a gay emotion. A grand object leaves upon the mind an impression of grandeur. In all sublime scenes, there is a mixture of the awful. The view of the skies by night; the moon moving in the brightness of her course; and the host of heaven in silent majesty performing their eternal rounds, strike an awe and adoration into the mind; we feel divinity present; we bow down and worship in the temple which the Most High God hath built with his hand, and hath filled with his presence. The presence of a respectable character raises a similar impression on the mind; and the man who sets the Lord always before him, will feel his heart impressed with that mixture of seriousness and holy fear, which the Psalmist here recommends, when he says, "Stand in awe."

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In further treating upon this subject, I shall, in the *first* place, point out the advantages of this seriousness and reverence which we ought to maintain upon our minds; and, in the *second* place, shew you the suitableness of this temper of mind to our present state.

The *first* thing proposed, is to point out the advantages of this seriousness and reverence which we ought to maintain upon our minds.

The great art of happiness consists in regulating, with propriety, the various offices of human life. To allow no duty to interfere with another; to prevent devotion from growing austere; and to restrain enjoyment from being criminal, is the mark of true wisdom and of true piety. Every department of life is beautiful in its season. There is a time to be cheerful, and a time to be serious: an hour for solitude, and an hour for society. Providence hath appointed great part of our happiness to consist in society. We find, in every situation of life, that it is not good for us to be alone. Hence, civil society at first was instituted; hence attachments are daily formed; and man is cemented to man by every feeling of nature, and every tie of the heart. But, as we abuse and corrupt every thing, the blessing of society is often turned into a curse. To innocent cheerfulness, a wanton levity succeeds, which banishes sober thought, and laughs at every thing that is serious. How often, in life, do we meet with the sons and daughters of folly, whose sole business is amusement; whose life is one continued scene of idleness and dissipation; everlasting triflers, whose volatile minds are perpetually on the wing, as if they had been sent to this earth merely to play the fool.

Not that I condemn cheerful society and innocent enjoyment. When God gives, let man enjoy. Let us drink from the fountain of joy, when we are sure there is no poison in the cup. But, my brethren, I must remind you, that but a narrow interval, often but a single step, lies between enjoyment and excess: between the voice of mirth and the roar of riot; be-

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tween innocent entertainment, and a loose and licentious indulgence. Look back on your past life, and tell me, O man! when was it that you felt yourself most strongly inclined to go astray? When was it that you found yourself seduced in thought, to wander from the paths of purity and uprightness? Was it not in the hour of levity and indulgence? Did not your heart betray you when your spirits were elevated; when you had banished sober recollection, and delivered yourself over to the delirium of excessive joy? Here then is the advantage of seriousness and reverence. It places a guard upon the heart. It keeps the world and its temptations at a due distance. It consecrates the mind in which it resides, as with the presence of the Deity. A heart thus impressed with the fear of God, will not so readily be assaulted by the tempter; nor so easily yield to the temptation. An impure and profane guest will hardly venture upon hallowed ground, or dare to violate the sanctity of a temple. The presence of a good man is a check upon the turbulence and uproar of the giddy; they are inspired with a reverence for his character; they feel how awful goodness is, and restrain themselves from those indecent levities to which they are accustomed. If a regard for man has such influence upon the mind, what may the fear of God be supposed to have? The man who is possessed of this holy fear, sets the Lord always before him. He enters beforehand into heaven, and dwells in the presence of God. And canst thou, O man! defile the purity of heaven with the deeds of hell? Darest thou violate the law in the presence of the Law-giver? Darest thou sin in the very face of the Maker? Wilt thou make the Judge of all the earth the witness of thy wicked actions, the beholder of thy loose moments?—No;—in such a presence thou will banish all impure thoughts, and all unhallowed affections, like Moses at the burning bush, because the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

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Thus, of itself, this serious frame of mind is the guardian and the protector of religion; and it also associates with other virtues which belong to the Christian character. Those who are acquainted with the nature of the mind, know the influence and extent of association upon human life and manners. It is not a single quality that marks and characterizes a man; the virtues and the vices come in a train; it is the temper of the soul which is all in all in the conduct of human life. But to the temper and disposition here recommended, the most respectable attributes of the mind, and the most amiable qualities of the heart, are allied and peculiar.

In the first place, this serious frame of mind cherishes those higher virtues of the soul, which, in the emphatic language of the Sacred Scripture, are called "the armour of God." In the solemn silence of the mind are formed those great resolutions which decide the fate of men. That magnanimity which rises superior to the events of life; that fortitude which bears up under the pressure of affliction; and that Christian heroism, which, neither moved with the threatenings of pain, nor with the blandishments of pleasure, holds on rejoicing to the end; are all of them but expressions of this character, varied and diversified according to the occurrences of life. They are the light, the giddy, and the volatile, who are the sport of caprice, or the prey of passion. Persons of such a character, have no permanent principle of action; they are the sinners or the saints of accident; and assume every folly to which the fashion of the world gives its sanction. Very different is the serious man who communes with his own heart. He follows not the multitude. He possesses that strenuous and steady mind, which walks by its own light, which holds its purpose to the last; that self-deciding spirit, which is prepared to act, to suffer, or to die, as duty requires. Being thus by the grace of God, the master of his own mind, he is above the world; and through prosperity or adversity, through life or death, goes forth conquer-

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ing, and to conquer. He is not guided by events like the giddy multitude, who fall into any form by the fortuitous concourse of accidents; but, imitating the Providence of Heaven, he takes a direction of events, and makes the course of human affairs bend to his purposes, and terminate in his honour.

Further, this temper and disposition is no less favourable to the milder virtues of humanity. A serious mind is the companion of a feeling heart. It is a-kin to that virtuous sensibility, from which all the sympathetic emotions are derived; and readily associates with those good affections which constitute the most amiable part of our nature. The thoughtless and the dissipated are unconcerned spectators of human happiness or misery; they mar not their enjoyments by rushing into foreign woe; and are never so much in earnest, as to give a tear to the distresses of mankind. "They lie upon beds of ivory," saith the Prophet; "they stretch themselves upon their couch-"es; they chant to the sound of the viol; and they "anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but "they are not grieved for the affliction of their breth-"ren." But he who feareth God, will also regard man. The hour of incense has always been the hour of alms-giving. Whilst the heart is lifted up in devotion to God, the hands will be stretched out in beneficence to man. Think not, my friends, that these are duties of inferior importance, and not proper to be called up to your remembrance upon this occasion. The ordinance which you are soon to celebrate, is the communion of saints, and the feast of love. The cup of blessing which we bless, saith the Apostle, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? As we are all partakers of that one bread, so, by that participation, we being many, become one body. Being thus the members of one body, the great law follows, which he afterwards lays down, That if one member suffers, all the members

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should suffer with it; and if one member rejoices, all the members should rejoice.

The *second* thing proposed, was to shew you the suitableness of this temper of mind to our present state.

And, in the *first* place, it is suited to that dark and uncertain state of being in which we now live. Human life is not formed to answer those high expectations which, in the era of youth and imagination, we are apt to entertain. When we first set out in life, we bid defiance to the evil day; we indulge ourselves in dreams and visions of romantic bliss; and fondly lay the scene of perfect and uninterrupted happiness for the time to come. But experience soon undeceives us. We awake, and find that it was but a dream. We make but few steps in life, without finding the world to be a turbulent scene; we soon experience the changes that await us, and feel the thorns of the wilderness wherein we dwell. Our hopes are frequently blasted in the bud; our designs are defeated in the very moment of expectation, and we meet with sorrow and vexation, and disappointment, on all hands. There are lives besides our *own*, in which we are deeply interested; lives in which *our* happiness is placed, and on which our hopes depend. Just when we have laid a plan of happy life; when, after the experience of years, we have found out a few chosen friends, and have begun to enjoy that little circle in which we would wish to live and to die, an unexpected stroke disappoints our hopes, and lays all our schemes in the dust. When, after much labour and care, we have reared the goodly structure; when we have fenced it, as we fondly imagine, from every storm that blows, and indulge the pleasing hope, that it will always endure, an invisible hand interposes, and overturns it from the foundation. Who knoweth what awaits him in life? Who knoweth the changes through which he is destined to pass? Son of prosperity! Thou now lookest forth from thy high tower; thou now gloriest in thine excellence; thou

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sayest that thy mountain stands strong, and that thou art firm as the cedar of Lebanon.—*But stand in awe.* Before the mighty God of Jacob, and by the blast of the breath of his nostrils, the mountain hath been overturned, and the cedar in Lebanon hath fallen like the leaf before the whirlwind. At this very moment of time, the wheel is in motion that reverses the lot of men; that brings the prosperous to the dust, and lays the mighty low. Now, O man! thou rejoicest in thy strength, but know, that for thee the bed of languishing is spread; pale, ghastly, and stretched on thy couch, thou shalt number the tedious hours, the restless days, the wearisome nights, that are appointed to thee, till thy soul shall be ready to "choose "death rather than life." Thou now removest from thee the evil day, and sayest, in thy heart, thou shalt never see sorrow; but remember the changes of this mortal life; for thee the "cup of trembling" is prepared, and the "wine of astonishment is poured "out." How often, in an instant, doth a hand unseen shift the scene of the world! The calmest and the stillest hour precedes the whirlwind, and it hath thundered in the serenest sky. The monarch hath drawn the chariot of state in which he was wont to ride in triumph, and the greatest who ever awed the world, have moralized at the turn of the wheel.

In the *second* place, the propriety of this temper will appear, if we consider the scene that soon awaits us, and the awful change of being that we have to undergo. The sentence of the Lord is passed upon all flesh. Man who art born of a woman! one day thou must die. The decree is gone forth, and the time appointed for its fulfilment is approaching fast. Short is the period which is allotted to mortal man. In a little time the scene changes, and the places that knew us shall know us no more. We bid an eternal adieu to all below the sun; we enter on a new state of being, and appear in the immediate presence of God. After death comes the judgment. Thou must answer, O man! to the Searcher of hearts, for

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the deeds done in the body. The actions of thy past life shall rise up to thy remembrance; the secrets of thy soul shall be disclosed; and thy eternal doom be fixed by God, the Judge of all. If thy last moments thou *will be serious*, and *stand in awe*. The most thoughtless sinner will stand aghast, and the stoutest heart will tremble at that awful, that parting hour, when, to the closing eye, God appears, with as full conviction, as if the curtain between both worlds was withdrawn, and the Judge in very deed, descended to his tribunal. How serious wilt thou be when surrounded by the sad circle of thy weeping friends, thou readest in their altered looks, that thy hour is come; when cut off from all connection with mortality, thou takest thy last look of what thou heldest dear in life; when the cold sweat, the shivering limb, and the voice faultering in the throat, announce thy departure into the world unknown! What manner of persons ought we to be, who have such events awaiting us! Ought we not to stand in awe; to join trembling with our mirth; to commune with our hearts alone, and be still as in the presence of that God, before whose tribunal we have soon to appear?

In the *third* place, this frame of mind is peculiarly proper for you now, as a preparation for that solemnity which you are soon to celebrate. Holy is every ordinance of the Lord; but this is the holiest of all, and should inspire us with reverence and godly fear. You are to be engaged in the most solemn ordinance of our religion. You are to be employed in the most important work of your lives, to seal your vows in the faith of everlasting redemption. You are going to transact with the God of Glory, before whom ten thousand times ten thousand angels and archangels bow down and admire and adore. You are about to commemorate the most tremendous event which is to be found in the records of time; that scene which made the sun grow dark, and which the earth trembled to behold. God shews himself to be

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awful, even when he manifests his mercy, and causes all his goodness to pass before you. When he blesses men with the greatest testimony of his love, it is by smiting his own Son; when the gate of heaven is set open to the world, it is opened by *the blood of One who is higher than the heavens*. Whilst thou rejoicest therefore at the remembrance of thy redemption, think with wonder upon the ransom by which it was accomplished, and implore the assistance of the Divine Spirit, that you may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

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SERMON VI.

JOB xxx. 23.

For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

THIS book of Job contains the history of a righteous man, fallen from the height of prosperity, into scenes of great distress. Almost every affliction which falls to the lot of mortal man, embittered his life. His goods were taken away by robbers; his body was smitten by a loathsome and tormenting disease; his family was cut off, and all his company made desolate by a sudden stroke from heaven; his surviving friends proved miserable comforters, and, instead of relieving, added to his afflictions. His head was bare to every blast of adversity, and his heart bled with all the varieties of pain. In the course of his complaint, he utters the genuine voice of sorrow, and pours forth his soul in lamentation and woe. He sets before us the evil day; he shews us the dark side of things, and presents to view those shades in the picture of human life, which must one day meet our eye. From these calamities, he passes, by a natural transition, to the consideration of the last evil in human life:—"I know that thou wilt bring me to death, "and to the house appointed for all living."

Man is a serious being. There is a string in the heart which accords to the voice of sorrow, and impressions of grief take the strongest hold of the mind. There is a time when solitude has a charm; when cheerfulness gives place to melancholy; and when the house of mourning is better suited to the soul than

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the house of mirth. Even our amusements often partake of a serious turn. For the sake of amusement, we give our attention to histories of woe; we sit spectators to the scene of sorrow, and devote the hours to melancholy and to tears. And yet, by a strange perversion of mind, though we rush into foreign woe, and take delight in weeping for the fate of others, yet our own departure excites little attention or regard, notwithstanding the many warnings which tell us that here we have no continuing city; although few weeks elapse without being marked with the funeral of a neighbour or a friend, we remain in a criminal indifference; the tear is soon dried upon our cheeks, and we muse upon the fate of our friends with unconcern. If, by removing the thought of death, men could remove the day of death, their conduct would admit of an excuse. But whether you think of it or not, death approaches, and the want of preparation will only serve to sharpen the sting, by the surprise with which it may strike.

Since we know then assuredly, that God will bring us to death, and to the house appointed for all living, let us consider, in the *first* place, the certainty of its approaching soon; *secondly*, the time and manner of its arrival; and, *thirdly*, the change which it introduces.

In the *first* place, let us consider the certainty of death's approaching soon.

All the works of nature, in this inferior system, seem only made to be destroyed. Man is not exempted. There is a principle of mortality in our frame, and, as if we were only born to die, the first step we take in life, is a step to the grave. It was not always so. Adam came from the hands of his Creator perfect and immortal. The Almighty created man after his own image. He planted in his frame the seeds of eternal life, to grow and flourish through a succession of ages. This noble shoot, which the hand of the Most High had planted, was blasted by sin. When man became a sinner, he became mortal. The doom

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was pronounced, that, after few and evil days, he should return to the dust from whence he was taken. Since that time, as soon as our eyes open on the light, we come under the law of immortality, and the sentence of death is passed. In the morning of our day, we set out on our journey for eternity; thither we are all fast tending; and day and night we travel on without intermission. There is no standing still on this road. To this great rendezvous of the sons of Adam we are continually drawing nearer and nearer. Our life is for ever on the wing, although we mark not its flight. Our motion down the stream of time is so smooth and silent, that though we are for ever moving, we perceive it not, till we arrive at the ocean of eternity. Even now, death is doing his work. At this very moment of time, multitudes are stretched on that bed from which they shall rise no more. The blood is ceasing to flow; the breath is going out; and the spirit taking its departure for the world unknown.

When we look back on our former years, how many do we find who began the journey of life along with us, and promised to themselves long life and happy days, cut off in the midst of their career, and fallen at our side! They have but gone before us; one day we must follow. O man! who now rejoicest in the pride of life, and looking abroad, sayest in thy heart, thou shalt never see sorrow; for thee the bed of death is spread; the worm calls for thee to be her companion; thou must enter the dominions of the dead, and be gathered to the dust of thy fathers. If then death be certainly approaching fast, let us learn the true value of life. If death be at hand, then certainly time is precious. Now the day shines, and the Master calls us; in a little time the night cometh, when no man can work. To-day, therefore, hear the voice which calls you to heaven. "Now is the accepted time; "now is the day of salvation."—"Whatsoever thy "hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there "is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wis- "dom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

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In the *second* place, we may consider the time and manner of the arrival of death.

Death is called in Scripture, *the land without any order;* and without an order the king of terrors makes his approaches in the world. The commission given from on high, was, "Go into the world: Strike; strike "so, that the dead may alarm the living." Hence it is, that we seldom see men running the full career of life; growing old among their childrens' children, and then falling asleep in the arms of nature, as in the embraces of a kind mother; coming to the grave like a shock of corn fully ripe; like flowers that shut up at the close of the day. Death walks through the world without any order. He delights to surprise, to give a shock to mankind. Hence, he leaves the wretched to prolong the line of their sorrow, and cuts off the fortunate in the midst of their career; he suffers the aged to survive himself, to outlive life, to stalk about the ghost of what he was, and aims his arrow at the heart of the young, who puts the evil day far from him. He delights to see the feeble carrying the vigorous to the grave, and the father building the tomb of his children. Often when his approaches are least expected, he bursts at once upon the world, like an earthquake in the dead of the night, or thunder in the serenest sky. All ages and conditions he sweeps away without distinction; the young man just entering into life, high in hope, elated with joy, and promising to himself a length of years; the father of a family from the embraces of his wife and children; the man of the world, when his designs are ripening to execution, and the long expected crisis of enjoyment seems to approach. These and all others are hurried promiscuously off the stage, and laid without order in the common grave. Every path in the world leads to the tomb, and every hour in life hath been to some the last hour.

Without order, too, is the manner of death's approach. The king of terrors wears a thousand forms; pains and diseases, a numerous and a direful train,

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compose his host. Marking out unhappy man fr their prey, they attack the seat of life, or the seat f understanding; hurry him off thē stage in an instant, or make him pine by slow degrees: blasting the bloom of life, or, waiting till the decline, according to the pathetic picture of Solomon, "They make the "strong men bow themselves, and the keepers of the "house tremble; make the grinders cease; bring the "daughters of music low; darken the sun, and the "moon, and the stars; scatter fears in the way, and "make desire itself to fail, until the silver cord be "loosed, and the golden bowl be broken, when the "dust returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit as-"cends to God who gave it."

In the *third* place, we have to consider the change which death introduces.

Man was made after the image of God; and the human form divine, the seat of so many heavenly faculties, graces, and virtues, exhibits a temple not unworthy of its Maker. Men in their collected capacity, and united as nations, have displayed a wide field of exertion and of glory. The globe hath been covered with monuments of their power, and the voice of history transmits their renown from one generation to another. But when we pass from the living world to the dead, what a sad picture do we behold! The fall and desolation of human nature; the ruins of man; the dust and ashes of many generations scattered over the earth. The high and the low; the mighty and the mean; the king and the cottager, lie blended together, without any order. The worm is the companion, is the sister of him who thought himself a different species from the rest of mankind. A few feet of earth contain the ashes of him who conquered the globe; the shadows of the long night stretch over all alike; the monarch of disorder, the great leveller of mankind, lays all on the bed of clay in equal meanness. In the course of time, the land of desolation becomes still more desolate; the things that were, become as if they had never been; Baby-

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lon is a ruin; her heroes are dust; not a trace remains of the glory that shone over the earth, and not a stone to tell where the master of the world is laid. Such, in general, is the humiliating aspect of the tomb; but let us take a nearer view of the house appointed for all living. Man sets out in the morning of his day, high in hope, and elated with joy. The most important objects to him are the companions of his journey. They set out together in the career of life, and, after many mutual endearments, walk hand in hand through the paths of childhood and of youth. It is with a giddy recollection we look back on the past, when we consider the number and the value of those, whom unforeseen disaster and the hand of destiny hath swept from our side. Alas! when the awful mandate comes from on high concerning men, to change the countenance, and to send them away, what sad spectacles do they become! The friends whom we knew, and valued, and loved; our companions in the path of life; the partners of our tender hours, with whom we took sweet counsel, and walked in company to the house of God, have passed to the land of forgetfulness, and have no more connection with the living world. Low lies the head that was once crowned with honour. Silent is the tongue to whose accents we surrendered the soul, and to whose language of friendship and affection we wished to listen for ever. Beamless is the eye, and closed in night, which looked serenity, and sweetness, and love. The face that was to us as the face of an angel, is mangled and deformed; the heart that glowed with the purest fire, and beat with the best affections, is now become a clod of the valley.

But shall it always continue so? If a man die, shall he live again? There is hope of a tree if it be cut down; but man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? Has the breath of the Almighty, which animated his frame, vanished into the air? Is he who triumphed in the hope of immortality, inferior to the worm, his companion in the tomb? Will light never rise on the long

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night of the grave? Does the mighty flood that has swept away the nations and the ages, ebb to flow no more? Have the wise and the worthy; the pious and the pure; the generous and the just; the great and the good; the excellent ones of the earth, who, from age to age, have shone brighter than all the stars of heaven, withdrawn into the shade of annihilation, and set in darkness to rise no more? No. While "the dust "returns to the earth as it was, the spirit shall re- "turn unto God who gave it." Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel of Christ. "We know, that if our earthly house of this taberna- "cle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The periods of human life passing away; the certainty of the dissolution which awaits us, and the frequent examples of mortality, which continually strike our view, lead us to reflect with seriousness upon the house appointed for all living. Death is the great teacher of mankind; the voice of wisdom comes from the tomb; reflections, which shew us the vanity, will teach us the value of life. Such meditations are particularly suited to beings like us, who are subject to infirmities and defects. For such is the weakness of human nature in this imperfect state; such is the strength of temptation in this evil world, that frail man is often led astray before he is aware. The enemy of the soul attacks us in every quarter; approaches often under false colours, and tries every disguise, to deceive and to destroy. Vice often borders on virtue; the narrow path and the broad way lie so near, that it is difficult to distinguish them, so as to order our goings aright. Inadvertence may frequently betray; the impetuosity of passion may precipitate, and the gentleness of our own nature mislead us into steps fatal to our peace. I speak not of wicked men, who acknowledge no guide but their passions, and submit to no law, but what one vice imposes upon another. I talk of the sincere and the good. The most watchful Christian has his unguarded moments;

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the most prudent man speaks unadvisedly with his lips, and the meekest lets the sun go down upon his wrath! Alas! man in his best estate is altogether vanity, and always stands in need of the lesson from the tomb. "O that they were wise," said Moses, "that they understood this, that they would consi- "der their latter end!"

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SERMON VII.

1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

O death! Where is thy sting? O grave! Where is thy victory?—Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE Messiah is foretold in ancient prophecy, as a magnificent Conqueror. His victories were celebrated, and his triumphs were sung, long before the time of his appearance to Israel. "Who is this," saith the prophet Isaiah, pointing him out to the Old Testament Church, "Who is this that cometh from "Edom; with dyed garments from Bozrah? This "that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the "greatness of his strength?"—"I have set my King "upon my holy hill of Zion.—I shall give him the "heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts "of the earth for his possession." As a Conqueror, he had to destroy the works of the great enemy of mankind; to overcome death, the king of terrors.

The method of accomplishing this victory, was as surprising as the love which gave it birth. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, "he himself likewise took part of the same, that "through his own death, he might destroy him that "had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their "lifetime subject to bondage." Accordingly, his passion on the cross, which you have this day commemorated, was the very victory which he obtained. The hour in which he suffered, was also the hour in

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which he overcame. Then he bruised the head of the old serpent, who had seduced our first parents to rebel against their Maker; then he disarmed the king of terrors, who had usurped dominion over the nations; then triumphing over the legions of hell, and the powers of darkness, he made a shew of them openly. Not for himself, but for us did he conquer. The Captain of our salvation fought, that we might overcome. He obtained the victory, that we may join in the triumphal song, as we now do, when we repeat these words of the Apostle; "O death! where "is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it abounds with consolations under all the evils of life; nor is its benign influence confined to the course of life, but extends to death itself. It delivers us from the agony of the last hour; sets us free from the fears which then perplex the timid; from the horrors which haunt the offender, though penitent, and from all the darkness which involves our mortal state. So complete is the victory we obtain, that Jesus Christ is said in Scripture to have *abolished* death.

The evils in death, from which Jesus Christ sets us free, are the following: In the *first* place, the doubts and fears that are apt to perplex the mind, from the uncertainty in which a future state is involved. *Secondly*, the apprehensions of wrath and forebodings of punishments, proceeding from the consciousness of sin. *Thirdly*, the fears that arise in the mind upon the awful transition from this world to the next.

In the *first* place, Jesus Christ gives us victory over death, by delivering us from the doubts and fears which arose in the minds of those who knew not the gospel, from the uncertainty in which a future state was involved.

Without Divine Revelation, men wandered in the dark with respect to an after life. Unassisted reason could give but imperfect information on this important article. Conjectures, in place of discoveries; presumptions, in place of demonstra-

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tions, were all that it could offer to the inquiring mind. The unenlightened eye could not clearly pierce the cloud which veiled futurity from mortal view. The light of nature reached little farther than the limits of this globe, and shed but a feeble ray upon the region beyond the grave. Hence, those heathen nations, of whom the Apostle speaks, are described as *sorrowing* and *having no hope*. And whence could reason derive complete information, that there was a state of immortality beyond the grave? Consult with appearances in nature, and you find but few intimations of a future life. Destruction seems to be one of the great laws of the system. The various forms of life are indeed preserved; but while the species remains, the individual perishes. Every thing that you behold around you bears the marks of mortality, and the symptoms of decay. He only who is, and was, and is to come, is without any variableness or shadow of turning. Every thing passes away. A great and mighty river, for ages and centuries, has been rolling on, and sweeping away all that ever lived, to the vast abyss of eternity. On that darkness light does not rise. From that unknown country none return. On that devouring deep, which has swallowed up every thing, no vestige appears of the things that were.

There are particular appearances also which might naturally excite an alarm for the future. The human machine is so constituted, that soul and body seem often to decay together. To the eye of sense, as the beast dies, so dies the man. Death seems to close the scene, and the grave to put a final period to the prospects of man. The words of Job beautifully express the anxiety of the mind on this subject. "If "a man die, shall he live again? There is hope of a "tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, "and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. "Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and "the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through "the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth

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" boughs like a plant ; but man dieth, and is cut off ; " man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? As the " waters fail from the sea ; as the flood decayeth and " drieth up : so man lieth down, and riseth not ; till " the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor " be raised out of their sleep." But what a dreadful prospect does annihilation present to the mind ! To be an outcast from existence ; to be blotted out from the book of life ; to mingle with the dust, and be scattered over the earth, as if the breath of life had never animated our frame !—Man cannot support the thought. Is the light which shone brighter than all the stars of heaven set in darkness, to rise no more ? Are all the hopes of man come to this,—to be taken into the councils of the Almighty ; to be admitted to behold part of that plan of Providence which governs the world, and when his eyes are just opened, to read the book,—to be shut for ever ? If such were to be our state, we would be of all creatures the most miserable. The world appears a chaos, without form, and void of order. From the throne of nature, God departs, and there appears a cruel and capricious being, who delights in death, and makes sport of human misery.

From this state of doubts and fears, we are delivered by the Gospel of Jesus. The message which he brought, was life and immortality. From the Star of Jacob, light shone even upon the shades of death. As a proof of immortality, he called back the departed spirit from the world unknown ; as an earnest of the resurrection to a future life, he himself arose from the dead. When we contemplate the tomb of nature, we cry out, " Can these dry bones live ?" When we contemplate the tomb of Jesus, we say, " Yes, they " can live !" As he arose, we shall in like manner arise. In the tomb of nature, you see man return to the dust from whence he was taken. In the tomb of Jesus, you see man restored to life again. In the tomb of nature, you see the shades of death fall on the weary traveller, and the darkness of the long

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night close over his head. In the tomb of Jesus, you see light arise upon the shades of death, and the morning dawn upon the long night of the grave. On the tomb of nature, it is written, "Behold thy end, "O man! Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt "return. Thou, who now callest thyself the son of "heaven, shalt become one of the clods of the val-"ley." On the tomb of Christ is written, "Thou "diest, O man! but to live again. When dust re-"turns to dust, the spirit shall return to God who "gave it. I am the resurrection and the life; he "that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet "shall he live." From the tomb of nature, you hear a voice, "For ever silent is the land of forget-"fulness? From the slumbers of the grave. Shall "we awake no more? Like the flowers of the field, "shall we be as though we had never been?" From the tomb of Jesus, you hear, "Blessed are the dead "that die in the Lord, thus saith the Spirit, for they "rest from their labours, and pass into glory:—In "my Father's house, there are many mansions; if it "were not so, I would have told you: I go to pre-"pare a place for you, and if I go away, I will come "again, and take you unto myself, that where I am, "there ye may be also."

Will not this assurance of a happy immortality, and a blessed resurrection, in a great measure remove the terror, and the sting of death? May we not walk without dismay through the dark valley, when we are conducted by a beam from heaven? May we not endure the tossings of one stormy night, when it carries us to the shore that we long for? What cause have we to dread the messenger who brings us to our Father's house? Should not our fears about futurity abate, when we hear God addressing us with respect to death, as he did the Patriarch of old, upon going to Egypt, "Fear not to go down to the grave; I will "go down with thee, and will bring thee up again."

Secondly, our victory over death consists in our being delivered from the apprehensions of wrath and

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forebodings of punishment, which arise in the mind from the consciousness of sin.

That there is a God who governs the world, the patron of righteousness, and the avenger of sin, is so manifest from the light of nature, that the belief of it has obtained among all nations. That it shall be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked; that God will reward those who diligently seek him, and punish those who transgress his laws, is the principle upon which all religion is founded. But whether mercy be an attribute in the Divine nature to such an extent that God may be rendered propitious to those who rebel against his authority, and disobey his commandments, is an inquiry to which no satisfactory answer can be made. Many of the divine attributes are conspicuous from the works of creation; the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God, appear in creating the world; in superintending that world which he has made; in diffusing life wide over the system of things, and providing the means of happiness to all his creatures. But from no appearances in nature does it clearly follow, that the exercise of mercy to offenders is part of the plan by which the universe is governed. For any thing that we know from the light of nature, repentance alone may not be sufficient to procure the remission of sins, the tears of contrition may be unavailable to wash away the stains of a guilty life, and the Divine favour may be implored in vain by those who have become obnoxious to the Divine displeasure. If in the calm and serene hour of inquiry, man could find no consolation in such thoughts, how would he be overwhelmed with horror, when his mind was disordered with a sense of guilt? When remembrance brought his former life to view, when reflection pierced him to the heart, darkness would spread itself over his mind, Deity would appear an object of terror, and the spirit, wounded by remorse, would discern nothing but an offended Judge armed with thunders to punish the guilty. If, in the day of health and prosperity, these reflections

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were so powerful to embitter life, they would be a source of agony and despair when the last hour approached. When life flows according to our wishes, we may endeavour to conceal our sins, and shut our ears against the voice of conscience. But these artifices will avail little at the hour of death. Then things appear in their true colours. Then conscience tells the truth, and the mask is taken off from the man, when our sins at that hour pass before us in review. Guilty and polluted as we are, covered with confusion, how shall we appear at the judgment seat of God, and answer at the bar of eternal justice? How shall dust and ashes stand in the presence of that uncreated Glory, before which principalities and powers bow down, tremble, and adore? How shall guilty and self-condemned creatures appear before him, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who chargeth his angels with folly? This is the sting of death. It is guilt that sharpens the spear of the king of terrors. But even in this view we have victory over death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. By his death upon the cross, an atonement was made for the sins of men. The wrath of God was averted from the world. A great plan of reconciliation is now unfolded in the gospel. Under the banner of the cross, pardon is proclaimed to returning penitents. They who accept the offers of mercy, and who fly for refuge to the hope set before them, are taken into favour; their sins are forgiven, and their names are written in the book of life. Over them death has no power. The king of terrors is transformed into an angel of peace, to waft them to their native country, where they long to be.

This, O Christian! the death of thy Redeemer, is thy strong consolation; thy effectual remedy against the fear of death. What evil can come nigh to him for whom Jesus died? Does the law which thou hast broken, denounce vengeance against thee? Behold that law fulfilled in the meritorious life of thy Redeemer. Does the sentence of wrath pronounced

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against the posterity of Adam sound in thine ears? Behold that sentence blotted out, that *hand-writing*, as the Apostle calls it, cancelled, nailed to thy Saviour's cross, and left there as a trophy of his victory. Art thou afraid that the cry of thy offences may rise to heaven, and reach the ears of justice? There is no place for it there; in room of it ascends the voice of that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. Does the enemy of mankind accuse thee at the judgment-seat? He is put to silence by thy Advocate and Intercessor at the right hand of thy Father. Does death appear to thee in a form of terror, and hold out his sting to alarm thy mind? His terror is removed, and his sting was pulled out by that hand, which, on mount Calvary, was fixed to the accursed tree. Art thou afraid that the arrows of Divine wrath which smite the guilty, may be aimed at thy head? Before they can touch thee, they must pierce that body, which, in the symbols of divine institution, was this day held forth crucified among you, and which at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, is for ever presented in behalf of the redeemed. Well then may ye join in the triumphant song of the Apostle, "O death! where is "thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

In the *third* place, Jesus Christ gives us victory over death, by yielding us consolation and relief under the fears that arise in the mind upon the awful transition from this world to the next.

Whoever left the precincts of mortality without casting a wishful look on what he left behind, and a trembling eye on the scene that is before him? Being formed by our Creator for enjoyments even in this life, we are endowed with a sensibility to the objects around us. We have affections, and we delight to indulge them: we have hearts, and we want to bestow them. Bad as the world is, we find in it objects of affection and attachment. Even in this waste and howling wilderness, there are spots of verdure and of beauty, of power to charm the mind, and make us

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cry out, "It is good for us to be here." When, after the observation and experience of years, we have found out the objects of the soul, and met with minds congenial to our own, what pangs must it give to the heart, to think of parting for ever? We even contract an attachment to inanimate objects. The tree under whose shadow we have often sat; the fields where we have frequently strayed; the hill, the scene of contemplation, or the haunt of friendship, become objects of passion to the mind, and upon our leaving them, excite a temporary sorrow and regret. If these things can affect us with uneasiness, how great must be the affliction, when stretched on that bed from which we shall rise no more, and looking about for the last time on the sad circle of our weeping friends,—how great must be the affliction, to dissolve at once all the attachments of life: to bid an eternal adieu to the friends whom we have loved, and to part for ever with all that is dear below the sun! But let not the Christian be disconsolate. He parts with the objects of his affection, to meet them again; to meet them in a better world, where change never enters, and from whose blissful mansions sorrow flies away. At the resurrection of the just; in the great assembly of the sons of God, when all the family of heaven are gathered together, not one person shall be missing that was worthy of thy affection or esteem. And if among imperfect creatures, and in a troubled world, the kind, the tender, and the generous affections, have such power to charm the heart, that even the tears which they occasion, delight us, what joy unspeakable and glorious will they produce, when they exist in perfect minds, and are improved by the purity of the heavens.

Christianity also gives us consolation in the transition from this world to the next. Every change in life awakens anxiety; whatever is unknown, is the object of fear; no wonder then that it is awful and alarming to nature, to think of that time when the hour of our departure is at hand; when this animal

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frame shall be dissolved, and the mysterious bond between soul and body shall be broken. Even the visible effects of mortality are not without terror: to have no more a name among the living; to pass into the dominions of the dead; to have the worm for a companion and a sister, are events at which nature shudders and starts back. But more awful still is the invisible scene, when the curtain between both worlds shall be drawn back, and the soul naked and disembodied appear in the presence of its Creator. Even under these thoughts, the comforts of Christianity may delight thy soul. Jesus, thy Saviour has the keys of death: the abodes of the dead are part of his kingdom. He lay in the grave, and hallowed it for the repose of the just. Before our Lord ascended up on high, he said to his disciples, "I go to my Father, and "to your Father, to my God, and to your God;" and when the time of your departure is at hand, you go to your Father, and his Father, to your God, and his God.

Enlightened by these discoveries, trusting to the merits of his Redeemer, and animated with the hope which is set before him, the Christian will depart with tranquillity and joy. To him the bed of death will not be a scene of terror, nor the last hour an hour of despair. There is a majesty in the death of the Christian: He partakes of the spirit of that world to which he is advancing, and he meets his latter end with a face that looks to the heavens.

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SERMON VIII.

PSALM xcvii. 1.

The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.

TO thinking men, the universe presents a scene of wonders. They find themselves brought into the world, they know not how. If they look around them, they behold the earth clothed with an infinite variety of herbs and fruits, subservient to their use, or administering to their delight. If they look above them, they behold the host of heaven walking in brightness and in beauty; the sun ruling the day; the moon and the stars governing the night. If they attend to the course of nature, they behold with wonder the various revolutions of the year; the gradual return of the seasons, and the constant vicissitude of day and of night. Whilst thus they are employed, they behold in the heavens the glory of their Creator; they discover in the firmament the handiwork of Omnipotence, and they hear the voice that nature sends out to the ends of the earth,—that all things are the workmanship of a supreme and intelligent Cause. As from these events they conclude the Almighty to be the Maker of the world; from the same events, they conclude that he is the Governor of the world which he hath made, and that Divine power is as requisite to preserve the order and harmony of the world now, as it was necessary to establish it at the first. But when experience unfolded to them the powers of natural bodies; when they saw machines contrived by human skill, ex-

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hibiting motions, and producing effects, similar to those which they observed in nature, by the impulse of matter upon matter; and when they saw these machines regularly exhibiting such motions, regularly producing such effects, although the head that contrived, and the hand that put them together; were removed from them; this raised an opinion, in some speculative minds, that the world resembled such machines; and that, as a clock will shew the hour of the day, in virtue of its original frame and constitution, without any further interposition of the artificer that framed it, so nature, in virtue of its original frame and constitution, may, and does produce every effect which we see around us, without any further interposition of its Divine Author.

This opinion is frequently mentioned and confuted in the Sacred Scriptures. Those men are condemned whose belief it was, that, in the course of human affairs, the Lord would not do good, neither would he do any evil. Although I seldom choose to carry you through the barren and unpleasant fields of controversy, yet as this question affects so deeply our religious comfort in this state, and our hopes of happiness in a future world, I shall consider it at large, and shall, in the *first* place, shew you the absurdity of that opinion which would exclude God from the government of the world.—*Secondly*, establish and confirm the doctrine of a *particular Providence*.—*Thirdly*, shew you the grounds of joy arising to the world from such a Providence.

In the *first* place, I am to shew you the absurdity of that opinion which would exclude God from the government of the world.

It has been thought by some, "That the Creator "of the universe formed the constitution of nature in "such a manner at the beginning, as to stand in need "of no succeeding change; that he established cer- "tain laws in the material and in the moral world, "which uniformly and invariably take place, produ- "cing all the effects which he ever intended they

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" should produce; as when an artist frames a machine " for certain purposes, and for a limited duration, the " effects which result from it spring not from the im- " mediate direction and influence of the artist, but " from the original frame and composition of the ma- " chine." Such is the opinion of those who hold what they call a *general Providence*. We, on the other hand, maintain that " Almighty God upon special occa- " sions, directs and over-rules the course of events, " both in the natural and moral world, by an imme- " diate influence, to answer the great designs of his " universal government."

With respect to a general Providence, this mechanical system, this engine by which some persons would throw out the superintending Providence of Heaven, is a creature of the brain. It is a mere presumption. It is by its own nature incapable of proof. From whence should the evidence arise? Art thou, who excludest God from his works, intrusted with the secrets of Heaven? Wert thou present when God laid the foundations of the world? Wert thou privy to his councils? Or do you now see, or can you shew, that original cause, or those original causes, established by God at the creation, from which all the various effects in nature may be deduced, and into which they may mechanically be resolved? Can you shew the immediate cause of lightning or of rain, or of any other phenomenon in nature, and from the immediate cause ascend to the second, from the second to the third, and so upward till you come to the last link of the chain, which hangs immediately upon the throne of God? This can be done in the works of art. An artist will shew you the dependence of all the movements in a machine upon one another; and when you are as well acquainted with the fabric of the world, as you may be with the structure of a machine, you may speak of your chain of mechanical causes and effects. But alas! the most improved philosophy can do no more but skim the surface of things; and in its pro-

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gress from the immediate visible to the first invisible cause, at one or two removes, it finds its period, beyond which it cannot go.

Further, this mechanical system of governing the world without the immediate interposition of the Deity, undermines the foundation of all religious worship. When we pray for our daily bread, what do we ask but the blessing of God upon the earth, to yield her fruits in due season? When we ask the blessing of God upon our meals, what do we less than recognize his supreme power, and implore him to make the gifts of his Providence the means of our sustenance and refreshment? This disclaims every notion of natural causes and effects that shuts out God; it supposes his concurrence and co-operation directing all the operations of nature. Again, when we pray for the graces and virtues of the spiritual life, what do we ask but the Divine aid to strengthen the good dispositions he hath already given us, and so to direct and order the course of events, that we may be kept from temptation, or not be overcome when we are tempted? But this supposes the superintendance of God over us; supposses his interposition in human affairs; supposes his Providence continually exerted in administering to the wants of his creatures, according as their circumstances require. If this account be just, then our worship is a reasonable service. But if these are vain words, then our worship also is vain. Then every one that goes into his closet to pray, goes only to act foolishly; then all the good and the pious, everywhere over the face of the whole earth, that are calling upon the Most High God, are as uselessly, as absurdly employed, as if they were falling down before a dumb idol, and paying their devotions to images of wood or stone.

Further still, this mechanical system, in a great measure, annihilates the moral perfections of the Divine nature. It places the Almighty in a state of indolence, which is inconsistent with every idea of perfection; it makes him an idle and unconcerned

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spectator of his own works, and represents him as beholding virtue and vice, the sinner and the saint, with an equal eye. There are many scenes in human life, at which, if we were present, it would be criminal for us not to take a part. Did we see the hands of the violent raised to shed innocent blood, and not rush to prevent the horrid deed; did we know the retreats of the robber and murderer, and not endeavour to bring them to public justice, we would be reckoned in part guilty of their crimes, as, by a criminal omission, we should endanger the peace of the public, and the interests of society. If we being evil, would abhor such a character, shall we impute it, can we impute it to Him who is infinite in goodness, and who is possessed of absolute perfection? To what purpose is God everywhere present, if he is not everywhere employed? Whereto serves infinite power, if it must be for ever dormant? Whereto serves infinite wisdom, if it is never to be exercised? To what purpose are the Divine goodness, and the Divine justice, if we only hear of their names? Are all the attributes of the Godhead in vain? How false, how absurd, how blasphemous, is an opinion that would destroy every Divine perfection!

I have thus shewn you the absurdity of that system which would exclude God from the government of the universe, and I am now, in the *second* place, to establish and confirm the doctrine of a particular Providence. This doctrine is founded both upon reason and the Scriptures.

Reason and true philosophy never attempt to separate God from his works. We must own him in the sky to hold the planets in their respective orbits; we must own him in the earth, and in the seas, to keep them within their proper bounds, and we must own him through the whole system of nature, to support and maintain that gravitating force which gives consistency and stability to all material things. Reason tells us, that it is not probable that the Creator of the universe would forsake that world which he had made;

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that it is not probable that a Being, possessed of infinite perfection, can be an idle and unconcerned spectator of his own works.

But our chief evidence for this doctrine rests upon Revelation. Mankind obtained early notices of the Divine superintendence, by peculiar interpositions. In the history of the Old Testament, we have an account of the loss of Paradise by sin; of the banishment of Cain for the murder of his brother; of the translation of Enoch, as the reward of his righteousness; of the wickedness of the old world, and its destruction by the deluge, Noah and his family only excepted, who, by the eminence of his piety, found grace in the sight of God to become the Father of the new world. When this new world revolted from God, and ran into idolatry, we see Abraham called out to be the head of a mighty nation, which grew up and flourished, by a series of the most wonderful providencies; governed by laws of God's own appointment; with promises of protection and blessing, so long as they should be obedient, and threatenings of punishment and destruction, if they fell off to serve other gods; which in the event were punctually verified. This was a visible and a standing evidence of a governing Providence. The doctrine was thus established upon a higher authority than reason, and upon better evidence than the light of nature. God revealed himself to men as the Governor of the world, the avenger of the wicked, and the protector of the good. But although in administering the affairs of the universe, the object of Providence should be to depress the bad and to favour the good; yet an exact retribution of rewards and punishments was none of the ends of his administration in this scene of things. This would have defeated the plan of his Providence, and superseded the necessity of a day of judgment. Nevertheless, he would frequently interpose to punish signal wickedness, or reward illustrious virtue. Thus, in the early ages of the world, he did often miraculously interpose, to let the nations understand that he

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took notice of their righteous or unrighteous deeds; that he had power to vindicate the honour of his laws, and to make examples whenever it was requisite, for the correction and reformation of men. Miraculous interpositions were not intended to be permanent or perpetual; yet the Providence of God was not to cease. Accordingly, he took care to inform us, that what in the first ages he had done visibly, and, by miracles, he would do in the latter ages by the invisible direction of natural causes. The Scriptures are so full of this notion, that it would be endless to be particular. You may read the twenty-eight chapter of Deuteronomy, where you will see all the powers of nature summoned as instruments in the hands of the Almighty, to execute the purposes of his will;—where you behold them commissioned to favour the good with national prosperity, with domestic comforts, with safety from their enemies, with fruitful seasons, with a numerous offspring, and with an abundance of all blessings;—commissioned to punish the wicked with national distresses, with indigence, with slavery, with destructions and molestations of every kind, by war, by famine, and by all sorts of diseases. From all which, the plain inference is this, that the most common and most familiar events, are under the direction of God, and by him are used as instruments, either for the hurt, or for the good of men.

How this particular Providence operates, may, in some degree, be conceived by us. Man, in his limited sphere, can take some direction of natural causes. You can direct the element of fire either to warm or to consume; the elements of air and water to cherish and to annoy: does not that power, then, in a more illustrious manner, belong to God? Is it not as easy for *Him*, think you, to give laws to the tempest, where to spend its force; to direct the meteor flying in the air, where to fall, and whom to consume? Are the elemental and subterraneous fires bound up? he can let them loose. Are they broken loose? he can collect them as in the hollow of his hand. And all

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this he performs, without unhinging the general system, and without any visible tokens to us, that he is at all concerned, though in truth he is the effective agent. In like manner, we may comprehend, in some measure, how God may direct, not only the motions of the inanimate and passive part of the creation, but also the determinations of free agents, to answer the purposes of His Providence. The hearts of men are in the hand of the Lord, as much as the rivers of water. This does not in the least destroy the freedom of human actions. Every one knows that the acts of free agents are determined by circumstances; and these circumstances are always in the hand of God. The dispositions and resolutions of men are apt to vary, according to the different turn or flow of their spirits, or their different situations in life, as to health or sickness, strength or weakness, joy or sorrow; and by the direction of these, God may raise up enemies, or create friends, stir up war, or make peace. Take, as an instance, the history of Haman. That wicked man had long meditated the destruction of Mordecai the Jew, and rather than not satiate his vengeance upon him, would involve the whole Jewish nation in utter destruction. He at last obtained a decree sentencing this whole people to the sword; and the day was fixed. In this crisis of their fate, how was the chosen nation to be delivered? Was God visibly and miraculously to interpose in favour of his own people? This he could have done; but he chose rather to act according to the ordinary train of second causes. He who giveth sleep to his beloved, withheld it from Ahasuerus, the monarch of Persia. In order to pass the night, he called for the records of his reign. There he found it written, that Mordecai had detected a conspiracy formed against the life of the king, and that he had never been rewarded for it. By this single circumstance, a sudden reverse took place. Mordecai was advanced to honour and rewards; the villainy of Haman was detected; the decree fatal to the Jews was revoked; and the nation

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of the Jews was saved from instant destruction. In like manner, in the history of Joseph, and other histories of the Old Testament, you see the most familiar events made instruments in the hand of God to effect the purposes of his will.

There is then a particular Providence. The arm of the Almighty, reaching from heaven to earth, is continually employed. All things are full of God. In the regions of the air; in the bowels of the earth; and in the chambers of the sea, his power is felt. Every event in life is under his direction and controul. Nothing is fortuitous or accidental. Let me caution you, however, against abusing this doctrine, by judging of the characters of persons from their outward circumstances. It is to be remembered, that the present life is not a state of recompence, but a state of trial; consequently, men are not dealt with in outward dispensations according to their true character. The goods of Nature and Providence are distributed indiscriminately among mankind. The sun shines, the rain falls upon the just and the unjust. It is a dangerous error, therefore, to judge of moral character from external condition in life. This was the error of Job's friends; this the foundation of the censures they cast against this excellent person, and for which they were reproved. The intention of the book of Job is, to shew the falseness of that supposition, by representing the incomprehensible Majesty of God, and the unsearchable nature of His works. Many instances in Scripture confirm the truth of this observation. Who, that saw David reduced to straits, wandering for refuge in the rocks and dens of the wilderness, would have believed him to be the prince whom God had chosen? Who, that beheld Nebuchadnezzar walking in his palace, surrounded with all the pomp and splendour of the east, would have believed him to be the object of Divine displeasure, and that the decree was gone out, that he was to be driven among the beasts? Who, that beheld our

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Lord in the form of a servant, would have believed that he was the Master of Nature?

I am, *lastly*, to deduce the practical consequences from the doctrine, by shewing you the grounds of joy and consolation that it gives to the world.

In the *first* place, the doctrine of a superintending Providence yields us joy and consolation with respect to our lot in life. Many persons are accustomed to complain concerning their situation and circumstances in the world. Their desires and their fortune do not correspond; they think that they are misplaced by Providence, and look upon the lot of their neighbours as more eligible than their own. It is impossible, in the present system of things, that all men can be alike. Nature, through all her works, delights in variety. Though every flower is beautiful and every star is glorious; yet one flower excelleth another in beauty, and one star exceedeth another in glory. There are also diversities in human life, and a beautiful subordination prevails amongst mankind. The Father of spirits hath communicated himself to men, in different degrees. But although all men cannot be alike; yet all men may enjoy a great measure of happiness. Every station in life possesses its comforts and advantages. In those comparisons you make of your life with that of others, when you would wish to exchange places with some of your more fortunate neighbours, do you not always find something in which you have the superiority? Is there not some talent of the mind, some quality of the heart, something where you think your strength lies, some one source of enjoyment which you would wish still to retain? Is not this the testimony of nature, that you are happier in that path of life, than you would be in another? Wherever you are placed by Providence, the station appointed is the post of honour. A general, in the day of battle, marshals his army according as he sees proper, and distributes the posts of danger, and importance, according to the courage and the conduct of his soldiers. Your Com-

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mander knows your abilities better than you do yourselves: he prescribed to you the duty you have to execute; and he marked out the path in which you are to seek for honour and immortality. It is from your discharge of these offices assigned to you, that the happiness of your life, and the perfection of your character, are to arise. It is not from the sphere they hold in life, but from the lustre they cast around them in that sphere, that men rank in the Divine estimation, and figure in the annals of eternity. If, with five talents, you gain five more, or if, even with one talent, you gain another, you are as praise-worthy as he who, with ten talents, gaineth other ten talents.

Further, as in a kingdom, every high-way leads to the capital; as in a circle, every line terminates in the centre; so, in the wide circle of nature, every line terminates in heaven; and every path in life conducts alike to the great city of God. The present state is intimately connected with the future; the life which we now lead, is an education for the life which is to come. If your mind were enlarged to comprehend all the connections and dependencies of things, if your eyes were opened to take in the whole of your immortal existence, you would then see and acknowledge, that Providence had assigned to you the very station you would have wished to fill; the very part you would have chosen to act. Trusting, therefore, in that God who presides over the universe; assured of that wisdom and goodness which direct the whole train of the Divine administrations, each of us may express our joy in the words of the Psalmist: "The "lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a "goodly heritage: The Lord is the portion of mine "inheritance; the Lord will command the blessing, "even life, for ever more."

In the *second* place, this doctrine will yield us consolation during the afflictions which we meet with in life. If we believed that the universe was a state of anarchy, confusion, and uproar, that the Governor of the world was a cruel and malignant being, who

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made sport of human misery, and took pleasure in punishing his unhappy creatures; such a thought would overwhelm the mind; it would turn the gloom of adversity into the shadow of death, and mingle poison in the cup of bitterness which we are doomed to drink. But the Scriptures inform us, that the dark dispensations of Providence are part of that plan which has the good of the world for its object; take their rise from the goodness of our Father in heaven; are intended for the reformation and final blessedness of his children. The same word of life which says, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and makest "approach unto thee," says also, "Blessed is the "man whom thou chastenest." So far from being marks of the Divine wrath, the afflictions of life are tokens of the Divine love. While heedless and unthinking we go astray, God interests himself in our favour, and sends these his messengers to bring us to himself. It is but a narrow and imperfect view we take of afflictions, when we consider them only as trials. They are not so much intended for the trial as for the cultivation of virtue. They are sent by Providence, to mortify your unruly passions; to wean you from the world; to prepare you for heaven: They are sent for the improvement of your nature; for the increase of your graces, and for the superabounding of your joy to all eternity. When under the afflicting hand of Heaven, therefore, you are standing a candidate for immortality; you are singled out by Providence to exert the part of a Christian, and you are called forth to exhibit to the world a pattern of the suffering virtues. He is but a novice in the school of Christ, who has not learned to suffer. The best affections of the heart, the noblest graces of the soul, the highest virtues of life, the offering that is most acceptable to Heaven, arise from the proper improvement of adversity. The blessed above, whom the Prophet saw arrayed in white before the throne, came out of great tribulation; the blessed above, whom he heard singing the song of Moses and

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the Lamb learned the first notes of it on the bed of sorrow.

Such is the intention of afflictions which Providence sends, and even under these afflictions God is with his people You are ever under the hand of a merciful Creator, who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men: he knoweth your frame; he remembereth that you are but dust; he will afflict you no further than you are able to bear; and as your days are, he hath promised that your strength shall be. Nay, in all your afflictions he is present with you, and the hand that bruised you binds up the wound. Let not then your hearts be troubled. Bear up under the pressure of woe. Rejoice, because the Lord reigneth, and exult in the language of the Prophet: "Although the fig-tree should not "blossom, nor fruit be found in the vine; though "the labour of the olive should fail, and the field "should yield no meat; though the flocks should be "cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in "the stall, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy "in the God of my salvation."

Thirdly, with respect to appearances of moral evil and disorder, it is afflicting to the mind to behold disorder in the universe of God: bad men often exalted, while the good man's lot is bitterness and pain: virtue depressed, and vice triumphant. He who caused light to arise out of darkness, and order and beauty to spring from chaos and confusion, can correct these irregularities. He not only restrains, and says, "Hitherto, and no further;" He also overrules and makes the wrath of men to praise him. Hear how he gives commission, and sends Senacherib against Israel, as a general sends a weapon of war. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, I will send him "against an hypocritical nation, and against the peo-"ple of my wrath, to tread them down like the mire "of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, nei-"ther doth his heart think so;" that is, neither doth his heart think that he is a mere instrument in the

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hand of God. David was raised to the throne of Israel by those steps which his foes devised against him. The enemy of mankind, seducing our first parents, was the means of their being elevated to a greater degree of happiness and glory.

Lastly, with respect to our departure from this world, and entering upon a new state of being. We know that the time is appointed, when dust shall return unto dust, and the spirit unto God who gave it. But it is awful, it is alarming, to nature, to call up the hour when the union between soul and body shall be dissolved; when our connection with all that we held dear in life shall be broken off; when we shall enter upon a new state of existence, and become inhabitants of the world unknown. But even then the Providence of God will give us comfort. The Lord reigneth king for ever and ever. The dominions of the deed are part of his kingdom; time and eternity, the world that now is, and the world that is to come, confess him for their Lord. When thou goest through the dark valley, he will go with thee: in the hour of dissolving nature, he will support thy spirit. Thou canst not go but where God is. Around thee is infinite love, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms.

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SERMON IX.

PROVERBS iv, 18.

The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

HUMAN life has been often compared to a journey, for this as well as for other reasons, that we are always making progress in our way. In whatever path we set out, there is no standing still. Evil men wax worse and worse: the corruptions of their nature gather strength: the vices which they have contracted grow into habit; the evil principle is for ever on the increase, till, having attained the ascendant over the whole man, it subjects him entirely to its own power, the willing and obedient servant of sin. Good men, on the other hand, make advances, in the paths of righteousness. The grace of God, which is given unto them, lies not dormant. The better mind with which they are endowed, incites them to virtue: the new nature which they have put on, pants after perfection. They give all diligence to add to their faith virtue, and to virtue temperance, and to temperance brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity, until, having abounded in every good work, they perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Such a life is here called the *path of the just*. By *the just* in Scripture, are not meant those who merely abstain from doing unjust and injurious things to their neighbours. The just man is he who possesses that sincerity of heart, and that integrity of the whole life which God requires of man.

The life of such a man is here compared to the light

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of the morning. Nothing in nature is more lovely than the light. When the Spirit began to move upon the face of the deep, light was the first effect of his creating power; and when the six day's work was finished, light collected and centred in the sun, continued to be the grandest and most beautiful work of nature; so grand and beautiful, that among many of the heathen nations it was worshipped as the visible divinity of the world. What light is to the face of external nature, the beauty of holiness is to the soul. It is the brightest ornament of an immortal spirit; it throws a glory over all the faculties of man; and forms that robe of beauty with which *they* shine, who walk in *white* before the throne of God.

But it is chiefly on account of its progressive nature, that the path of the just is here compared to the shining light. In order to illustrate this, I shall, in the *first* place, Shew how we shall know if we have made progress in the paths of righteousness. *Secondly*, Give you some directions how to make further progress. *Thirdly*, Exhort you to a life of progressive virtue.

I am first, then, to shew how we shall know if we have made progress in the paths of righteousness.

In the *first* place, let me ask you, are you sensible of your faults and imperfections? The first indication of wisdom is to confess our ignorance, and the first step to virtue is to be sensible of our own imperfections. The novice in science is puffed up with his early discoveries; when the first ray of wisdom is let in upon his mind, he thinks that by it he can see and know all things; deeper views and maturer reflection convince him how little he knows. In like manner, he knows little of religion, and has been but a short time in the school of Christ, who is blind to his own imperfections. Our fall from innocence was by pride, and we must rise by humility.—"He that humbleth "himself shall be exalted," is the doctrine which our Lord delivered upon all occasions. Till we feel our own weakness, we can never be strong in the Lord;

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we never can rise in the Divine sight, till we sink in our own estimation. We often meet with persons in life, who talk very strangely upon this subject. They tell us that they are as good as ever they expect to be: that in looking back upon their past life, they see nothing done which they would wish undone; and that if they were to begin life anew, they would act precisely as they have acted. Concerning such persons, we may safely pronounce that they have made but little progress in the path of the just. They are strangers to their own hearts, and have not proper ideas of the Divine law. They measure the law of God by the laws of men, and think that if their external conduct is blameless, they have acted their part well: not considering that the law of God extends to the heart, and punishes for the omission of duty as well as for the commission of sin. Such errors the Pharisees taught of old; and such notions of duty Paul had imbibed before his conversion to Christianity. "After the straitest sect of our reli-"gion," says he, "I lived a Pharisee; touching the "law, blameless.—I was alive without the law once." That is, when I did not know the law in its true sense, I thought myself alive and a saint. The Pharisaical doctrines in which he had been educated, taught him that God required no more than a conformity of the external behaviour to the letter of the law. But when he discovered that the Divine law extended to the heart; when thus in its power, the commandment came, "sin revived and I died;" then I saw myself to be a sinner, and died to the self-conceit which I formerly entertained.

Secondly, Let me ask you, what is the strength of your attachment to the cause of righteousness? As you are sensible of your faults, and have seen the deformity of sin, are you enamoured with the beauty of holiness? Do you desire nothing more earnestly than to put on the graces of the Gospel, and be conformed to the image of God? Men will never imitate what they do not love; if then you are not lovers of,

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goodness and virtue, you never will be good and virtuous. So long as they keep to generals, men may easily deceive themselves. Let us then come to particulars, and let me ask you with what regard and estimation you view those patterns of piety which you see exhibited in life. Are the good and the righteous, to you the *excellent ones* of the earth? The wise do not proportion their respect to men according to the rank they hold, or the name they bear in the world. It is the character of the just man, as drawn in Scripture, that he scorneth the vile, however exalted, and honoureth them that fear the Lord, however depressed. Do you then scorn the vile man, with all his attributes of rank and wealth and power? Do you despise the rich, the noble, the right honourable villain, and choose for your companion the righteous man, although he has not where to lay his head? Could you sit down with virtue in her cell, contented with her homely fare, with her poor abode, and look down with a generous contempt upon the splendid roof, where luxury and guilt lead on the festive hours? When you behold the wicked great in power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree, does your heart revolt from giving him that homage which the favours of Mammon never fail to extort from the venal multitude, and can you say, in the sincerity of your heart, "I would not exchange the peace of my own "mind for the wealth of the world? Whatever thou "art pleased to give, Father Almighty, may I pos- "sess it with honour: The world approaches to thine "altar, and bends before thy throne for temporal "blessings; the prayer of my heart is, *Lord lift up* "*on me the light of thy countenance.*"

Thirdly, Let me ask you, are your resolutions as firm, and your application as vigorous now, as when you first set out in the spiritual life? There are times in which all men are serious; in which the most obdurate minds feel impressions of religion, and in which persons of the most abandoned character form resolutions of amendment. With all the zeal of new

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converts, they set about a thorough reformation. They wonder how they have been so long blind to their true interest; they mourn over the time that they have lost in vain, or in sinful pursuits, and now seem fully determined to follow religion as the one thing needful. With many, this course continues not long; the first new object engages their attention, and turns them aside from the path of the just. But true religion, my friends, does not consist in such fits and starts of devotion; in random resolutions made in the fervour of zeal; in the wavering, desultory, and inconsistent conduct which marks the character of multitudes in the world. He alone is a good man who perseveres in goodness. When the vernal year begins, and the shower of summer descends, all nature bursts into vegetable life; the noxious weeds rival the trees among which they grow; but these sudden growths as suddenly disappear; while favoured by the influences of heaven, the trees arise to their full stature, and bring forth their fruit in season. Are you then as much in earnest now, as when your first love to God began to bring forth the fruits of righteousness? Without this undiminished ardour; without these unremitting efforts, you never will run the race set before you, so as to finish your course with joy. At the same time, I must take notice, that as you advance in years, all the passions will gradually cool. When, therefore, the fervour of youth has subsided, and mature age hath given a sober cast to the temper, you will not feel that degree of ardour in your devotions which you experienced in your early years. Many serious persons have been alarmed at this appearance, not considering that it was the effect of their constitution, and not a mark of apostacy from God. But your devotion will continue as sincere, though not so inflamed, as before, and religion will be as effectual as ever in the regulation of your life; like a mighty river, before it terminates its course in the ocean, it rolls with greater calmness, but at the same time with a greater strength, than when it arose from its source.

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Fourthly, Another mark of increasing grace, is, when you obey the Divine commandments from affection and love. They who, from the fear of hell, put on a form of religion for a time, find it to be a hard and a painful service. They are out of their place, when they strike into the path of the just; they consider religion as a heavy burden, which they would not bear but from necessity, and look upon the duties of the Christian life, as so many tasks which they have to perform. Whoever entertains such notions of religion, will not rise to high attainments in righteousness. The passions and affections are the powerful springs of action in the soul; and unless these are put in motion, the machine will move heavily along. He alone will make progress in the path of the just, who is drawn by the cords of love. Pleasant are the labours of love; and sweet is the precept when the duty pleases. The yoke is easy, and the burden light, when the heart goes along. The Christian is not a slave who obeys from compulsion, or a servant who works for hire: he is a son who acts from filial affection, and is happiest when he obeys. The love of Christ alone constraineth him. The beauty of holiness allureth him: though rewards and punishments were set aside, he would follow religion and virtue for their own sake, and do his duty, because therein he found his happiness. Do you then, my friends, feel this affection, this passion for righteousness? Can you say with the Psalmist, "How do I love thy laws, O "Lord? They are my meditation all the day. More "to be desired they are than gold, than much fine "gold; sweeter than honey from the honeycomb."

I now come to the *second* thing proposed, To give you some directions how to make further progress in the path of the just.

In the *first* place, then, in order to this, make a serious business of a holy life. There are many persons in the world who give a sanction to piety by their example, but who feel very little of its power. They think religion an exceedingly decent thing; they see

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it patronized by all wise men, and they know it to be necessary for the purposes of society. For these reasons they follow the faith, and conform to the usages of their fathers; they pay a proper respect to the institutions of the Church; and they attend upon the ordinances of Divine worship with all the marks of external reverence. So far their conduct is not only decent, but laudible. But if they go no further than this; if they confine their sanctity to these walls; if they think that they have done their duty, when they have complied with external ceremonies of the Church, and have adopted this as the easiest and most compendious method of being religious; the religion of such persons is rather a kind of good manners than real devotion. The true Christian will not be deficient in his attention to the externals of religion; but he will not rest there; he will attend upon the ordinances of public worship, not because it is the custom of the country, not because it is his duty to God; and he will observe the institutions of Christianity; not from complaisance to established usages, but from a sincere desire of making progress in righteousness. We must make piety more than a matter of form; we must make a study of a holy life, in order to advance from strength to strength, in the ways of the Lord: it is with religion, my friends, as with the other pursuits of life. In those arts where success depends upon genius and industry, unless a man have an enthusiasm for his own profession, unless he follow it from choice, and prefer it to all others, he will never rise to eminence and fame. In like manner, unless a man have an attachment of the heart to the cause of virtue; unless he be fervent in spirit to serve the Lord; unless he prefer a good conscience to every thing upon earth, he will never obtain that crown of glory which is reserved for the righteous. In his journey through life, the pilgrim may turn aside to behold a beautiful scene, or enjoy a passing delight; but he will never forget that his chief object is his journey to the promised land.

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In order to attain eminence in the arts just mentioned, the candidate devotes his best and happiest years; lives laborious days and restless nights; makes a sacrifice of ease, and health, and social joy; and at last consoles himself by the triumphant prospect of lying down upon the bed of fame, and living to future ages. If, then, studies of inferior importance become such a serious concern; if the desire of an imaginary immortality has such power over the mind; will this noblest of studies, the science of being good, have no attractions for the soul? Will this passion for a real immortality have no power over the heart? Under the influence of this principle, will not every one who has the faith of a Christian, or the feelings of a man, join with the Apostle, "Yea, doubtless, I "count all things but loss, for the excellency of the "knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord,—that I may "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and "the fellowship of his sufferings, being made con-"formable to his death, if by any means I may at-"tain to the resurrection of the dead." Under the influence of these principles, will not every person who desires to make advances in the path of the just adopt also the resolution of Job, "While my breath "is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils, "my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue "utter deceit; till I die I will not remove mine inte-"grity from me: my righteousness I hold fast, and "will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me "so long as I live."

In the *second* place, in order to make progress in the path of the just, you must never rest satisfied with any degrees of holiness or virtue which you attain. The law of the spiritual life is to aim at perfection: the intention of Christianity is that we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. "As he who hath called you is holy, be ye holy "in all manner of conversation." Absolutely perfect, indeed, we can never become in this life; but we must be always aspiring and endeavouring after

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perfection. There is no end of your journey till you come to heaven; there is no place by the way where you are to expect a termination from labour, or a period of repose. It is not uncommon to hear persons express themselves in terms of great indifference about the higher attainments in sanctity and virtue. They seem to be much afraid of being better than their neighbours; they have no ambition they say to be saints; they do not desire to rank among the very best; and they would be content with the lowest place in heaven. Happy, beyond all controversy, shall he be, who shall obtain a place, though the lowest, in the heavenly mansions; but for men to mark out to themselves boundaries in the path of virtue, beyond which they are resolved not to go; for men, with impious presumption, to cut out to themselves just such a portion of duty as they think will entitle them to an inestimable reward; this is undervaluing the pearl of great price; it is sacrificing the riches of the Divine goodness to their own indolence; it is doing despite to that Spirit of grace which might have been a powerful principle of advancing holiness in the heart. Had he to whom in the parable ten talents were given, gained no more than he to whom five were given, can you think that he would have obtained the title, and received the reward of a good and faithful servant? No, but of a slothful and unprofitable one, who had not improved aright the deposite of his Master. What saith the Apostle upon this subject? "Brethren, I count not myself to have "apprehended;" to have already attained perfection; "but this one thing I do; forgetting the things "which are behind, and reaching forth unto those "things which are before, I press toward the mark, "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ "Jesus."

"Forgetting the things that are behind," saith the Apostle. What things had this Apostle to forget? He had to forget his labours in the course of his apostolical functions, his unwearied zeal, his unremit-

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ting industry; in discharging the trust committed to him; his perilous journeys and voyages over the greatest part of the known world, to propagate the religion of Jesus; the many noted persons he converted by his ministry; the many flourishing churches he erected in the course of his travels; the many famous nations he brought over to the Christian faith; —he had to forget what of all things the best men pride themselves most in, the persecutions which he suffered for the sake of the Lord; the imprisonments which he endured, the wounds which he received, and the stripes which he bore, as a witness of truth, and a preacher of righteousness;—he had to forget that he was not behind the very chiefest Apostles; the many miracles which he wrought; the frequent revelations that were made to him;—he had to forget that, in the vision of God, he had ascended unto the third heaven, and was admitted to scenes, the beauties and the joys of which, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and the heart of man cannot conceive. If, notwithstanding such a high degree of grace and favour; if, after a life of such extraordinary piety; this Apostle forgot the things which were behind, and reaching forth to the things which were before, pressed toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; where is the man who can pretend to say, "I am already as perfect as I can ever expect to be?" Where is the man who is entitled to set a boundary to himself in the path of righteousness, saying, "Hitherto shall I go, but no further."

In the *third* place, in order to make progress in the path of the just, be alway employed in the improvement of your souls. There is no standing still in the path to heaven. Your evil habits, those cords that hold you in captivity to sin, you may not perhaps be able to cast away at once; but through the Divine grace, you will insensibly weaken, and at last break them asunder. Your inclinations that may

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have taken a wrong bent, you may counteract, and at last recover to their original rectitude. Where nature favours a particular exertion, or habit has formed you to a particular virtue, the one you may cherish, the other you may cultivate; upon both the fruits of righteousness will grow. Afterwards, be still attending to the culture of the soul, and meditating improvements, by calling forth graces that have not yet made their appearance, and bringing forward to perfection those that have. Thus will your minds resemble those trees, in which, at one and the same time, we behold some fruits arrived at full maturity; some half advanced; and others just formed in the opening blossom. By cultivating these graces in the soul, you will not only have an earnest, but also an image of heaven. The trees which thus grow up by the rivers of water; which bring forth their fruit in their season, and whose leaves continue ever green, shall be transplanted to happier climes to adorn the paradise of God.

In the *fourth* and *last* place, In order to make your endeavours effectual, you must abound in prayer to God for the assistance of his Holy Spirit. "No man "becomes good without the Divine influence. No "man can rise above the infirmities of nature unless "aided by God. He inspires great and noble pur- "poses. In every good man God resides. The "strength which renders a man superior to all those "things which the people either hope or dread, des- "cends from him. So lofty a structure cannot stand "unsupported by the Divinity." These, my friends, are the words of a heathen, and express a doctrine equally agreeable to reason and to revelation. In consequence of our corrupted nature, we are unable of ourselves to produce the virtues and graces of the Divine life. But we are not left without a remedy. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, aids are promised from above, to repair the ruins of our nature, and to restore the powers of the soul; God hath not forsaken the earth: as at the first of days, the Divine Spirit is

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still moving over the world to produce life. The Lord is ever nigh to them who call upon him in the sincerity of their heart. While we strive against sin, we may safely expect that the Divinity will strive with us, and impart that strength and power which will at last make us more than conquerors. As he who continues in wicked devices shall be sure to find Satan standing at his right hand, so he who begins a good life, shall find God befriending him with secret aid. He will assist the spirit that is struggling to break loose from the bonds of its captivity; he will aid the flight of the soul that is taking wing to the celestial mansions; he will support our feeble frame under the trials and conflicts to which we are appointed, and lead us on from grace to grace till we appear in Zion above. "They that wait upon "the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall "mount up as on eagles' wings; they shall run and "not be weary; they shall walk, and not be faint."

I come now to the *last* thing proposed, to exhort you to a life of progressive virtue.

In the *first* place, then, it is your duty to make progress in the ways of righteousness. In your sanctification, you are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. It is not enough that you continue stedfast and immoveable; you must also abound in the work of the Lord, if you expect your labours to be attended with success. It is not sufficient that you *continue* in well doing; you must also grow in grace, and increase with all the increase of God. This progressive nature of righteousness is implied in all the figures and images by which a good life is represented in Sacred Scripture. It is compared to the least of all seeds, which waxes to a great tree, and spreads out its branches, and fills the earth. It is compared to the morning light, at first faintly dawning over the mountains, by degrees enlightening the face of the earth, ascending higher and higher in the heavens, and shining more and more unto the perfect day. We are said to be here at the

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school of Christ; and in order to attain the character of good disciples, we must not only retain what we have acquired, but also add to the acquisitions we have made. The Christian life is represented as a warfare, and in this warfare we shall never gain the victory, unless we not only maintain the ground we have got, but also gain upon the foe. It is represented as a race set before us, and in running it we must continually press forward, or we shall never gain the prize. Every degree of grace which you receive, and every pitch of virtue, to which you attain, is a talent for which you are accountable: a talent, which if you only retain, but not improve, you will receive the doom of a slothful and wicked servant, and be cast into outer darkness. The Christian life is a life of continued exertion. At every stage in our pilgrimage on earth, new scenes will open; new situations will present themselves; and new paths to glory will be struck out. The sphere of action varies continually. We have, one while, to support adversity; another while, to adorn prosperity; sometimes to approve ourselves to God in solitude; at other times, to cause our light shine before men in society. Different situations in the world, and different periods of life, require the exercise of different virtues. What is accepted from the young soldier will not be excused in the veteran; what is an "ornament of grace" to the youthful brow, will not be a "crown of glory" to the hoary head.

Secondly, Let me exhort you to this life of progressive virtue, from the pleasing consideration that you will be successful in the attempt. In the pursuit of human honours and rewards, the successful candidates are few. In a race many run, but one only gains the prize. But here all who run may obtain. In the career of human glory, time and chance happen unto all, and many are disappointed. "The "race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the "strong; nor riches to men of understanding; nor "favour to men of skill." There is a concurrence

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of circumstances required to raise a man to reputation; and when these circumstances concur, if the moment of opportunity be not embraced, the field of glory may be lost for ever. In human life there is a favourable hour which never returns, and a call to fame which is repeated no more: even in its best estate, men ought to lay their account with disappointment and vexation. What hast thou set thy heart upon from thy youth; what has been the aim of all thy labours; what has been the object of thy whole life,—accident, artifice, ignorance, villany, caprice, may give to another whom thou knowest not. When thy ambition is all on fire: in the utmost ardour of expectation, in the very moment when thou stretchest out thy hand to grasp the prize, fortune may snatch it from thy reach for ever. Nay, thou mayest have the mortification to see others rise upon thy ruins, to see thyself make a step to the ambition of thy rival, and thy endeavours rendered the means of advancing him to the top of the wheel, while thou continuest low.

In the pursuits of ambition or avarice, you may be disappointed; but if by a progressive state of righteousness, you seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, I, in the name of God, assure you of success. Never was the gate of mercy shut against the true penitent; never was the prayer of the faithful rejected in the temple of Heaven; never did the incense of a good life ascend without acceptance on high. Liberal and unrestricted is the Divine benignity: free to all the fountain flows. There is no angel with a flaming sword to keep you from the tree of life. At this moment of time there is a voice from Heaven calling to you, "Come up hither." And if you are obedient to the call, God assists you with the aids of his Spirit; he lifts up the hands that hang down; he strengthens the feeble knees, and perfects his strength in your weakness. You are not left alone to climb the arduous assent. God is with you, who never suffers the Spirit which rests on him to

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fail; nor the man who seeks his favour, to seek it in vain. Your success in the path of the just will not only be pleasing to yourselves, but also to all around you. In the struggles of human ambition, the triumph of one arises upon the sorrows of another; many are disappointed when one obtains the prize. But in the path of the just, there is emulation without envy, triumph without disappointment. The success of one increases the happiness of all. The influence of such an event is not confined to the earth: it is communicated to all good beings; it adds to the harmony of the Heavens; and is the occasion of new hosannahs among the innumerable company of angels and spirits of just men made perfect, who rejoice over the sinner that repenteth.

Thirdly, Let me exhort you to make advances in the path of righteousness, from the beauty and the pleasantness of such a progress. Whatever difficulties may have attended your first entrance upon the path of the just, they will vanish by degrees; the steepness of the mountain will lessen as you ascend; the path in which you have been accustomed to walk, will grow more and more beautiful; and the celestial mansions to which you tend, will brighten with new splendour, the nearer that you approach them. In other affairs, continued exertion may occasion lassitude and fatigue. Labour may be carried to such an excess as to debilitate the body. The pursuits of knowledge may be carried so far as to impair the mind; but neither the organs of the body, nor the faculties of the soul, can be endangered by the practice of religion. On the contrary, this practice strengthens the powers of action. Adding virtue to virtue, is adding strength to strength: and the greater acquisitions we make, we are enabled to make still greater. How pleasant will it be to mark the soul thus moving forward in the brightness of its course! In the spring, who does not love to mark the progress of nature; the flower unfolding into beauty, the fruit coming forward to maturity, the fields advancing to

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the pride of harvest, and the months revolving into the perfect year? Who does not love in the human species, to observe the progress to maturity; the infant by degrees growing up to man; the young idea beginning to shoot, and the embryo character beginning to unfold? But if these things affect us with delight; if the prospect of external nature in its progress; if the flower, unfolding unto beauty; if the fruit coming forward to maturity; if the infant by degrees growing up to man, and the embryo character beginning to unfold, affect us with pleasurable sensations, how much greater delight will it afford to observe the progress of this new creation, the growth of the soul in the graces of the divine life, good resolutions ripening into good actions, good actions leading to confirmed habits of virtue, and the new nature advancing from the first lineaments of virtue to the full beauty of holiness! These are pleasures that time will not take away. While the animal spirits fail, and the joys which depend upon the liveliness of the passions decline with years, the solid comforts of a holy life, the delights of virtue and a good conscience, will be a new source of happiness in old age, and have a charm for the end of life. As the stream flows pleasantest when it approaches the ocean; as the flowers send up their sweetest odours at the close of the day; as the sun appears with greatest beauty in his going down; so at the end of his career, the virtues and graces of a good man's life, come before him with the most blessed remembrance, and impart a joy which he never felt before. Over all the moments of life, religion scatters her favours, but reserves her best, her choicest, her divinest blessings for the last hour.

In the *last* place, Let me exhort you to this progressive state of virtue, from the pleasant consideration that it has no period. There are limits and boundaries set to all human affairs. There is an ultimate point in the progress, beyond which they never go, and from which they return in a contrary direction. The flower

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blossoms but to fade, and all terrestrial glory shines to disappear. Human life has its decline as well as its maturity; from a certain period the external senses begin to decay, and the faculties of the mind to be impaired, till dust returns unto dust. Nations have their day. States and kingdoms are mortal like their founders. When they have arrived at the zenith of their glory, from that moment they begin to decline; the bright day is succeeded by a long night of darkness, ignorance, and barbarity. But in the progress of the mind to intellectual and moral perfection, there is no period set. Beyond these heavens the perfection and happiness of the just is carrying on; is carrying on, but shall never come to a close. God shall behold his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes; for ever drawing nearer to himself, yet still infinitely distant from the fountain of all goodness. There is not in religion a more joyful and triumphant consideration than this perpetual progress which the soul makes to the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at its ultimate period. Here truth has the advantage of fable. No fiction, however bold, presents to us a conception so elevating and astonishing, as this interminable line of heavenly excellence. To look upon the glorified spirit as going on from strength to strength; adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge; making approaches to goodness which is infinite; for ever adorning the Heavens with new beauties, and brightening in the splendours of moral glory through all the ages of eternity,—has something in it so transcendent and ineffable, as to satisfy the most unbounded ambition of an immortal spirit. Christian! does not thy heart glow at the thought, that there is a time marked out in the annals of Heaven, when thou shalt be what the angels now are; when thou shalt shine with that glory in which principalities and powers now appear; and when, in the full communion of the Most High, thou shalt see him as he is?

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The oak whose top ascends unto the heavens, and which covers the mountains with its shade, was once an acorn, contemptible to the sight; the philosopher, whose views extend from one end of nature to the other, was once a speechless infant hanging at the breast; the glorified spirits who now stand nearest to the throne of God, were once like you. To you, as to them, the Heavens are open; the way is marked out; the reward is prepared. On what you do, on what you now do, all depends.

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SERMON X.

MATTH. v. 5.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

THEY mistake the nature of the Christian religion very much, who consider it as separate and detached from the commerce of the world. Instead of forming a distinct profession, it is intimately connected with life; it respects men as acting in society, and contains regulations for their conduct and behaviour in such a state. It takes in the whole of human life, and is intended to influence us when we are in the house, and in the field, as well as when we are in the church or in the closet. It instructs men in their duty to their neighbours, as well as in their duty to God; it is our companion in the scene of business, as well as in the House of Prayer; and while it inculcates the weightier matters of the law, faith, judgment, and mercy, it neglects not the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. All that refinement which polishes the mind; all that gentleness of manners which sweetens the intercourse of human society, which political philosophers consider as the effects of wise legislation and good government; all the virtues of domestic life, are lessons which are taught in the Christian school. The wisdom that cometh from above is "gentle." The fruit of the Spirit is "meekness." As the sun, although he regulates the seasons, leads on the year, and dispenses light and life to all the planetary worlds, yet disdains not to raise and to beautify the flower which opens in his beam: so the Christian religion, though chiefly intended to teach us the

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knowledge of salvation, and be our guide to happiness on high, yet also regulates our conversation in the world, extends its benign influence to the circle of society, and diffuses its blessed fruits in the path of domestic life.

In farther treating upon this subject, I shall, in the *first* place, describe to you the character of meekness which is here recommended; and, in the *second* place, shew you the happiness with which it is attended. I am, in the *first* place, then, to describe to you the character of meekness which is here recommended.

Every virtue, whether of natural or revealed religion, is situated between some vices or defects, which, though essentially different, yet bear some resemblance to the virtue they counterfeit; on account of which resemblance they obtain its name, and impose upon those who labour under the want of discernment. This meekness, which is here recommended, is not at all the same with that courtesy of manners which is learned in the school of the world. That is but a superficial accomplishment, and often proceeds from a hollowness of heart. It is also quite different from constitutional facility, that undeciding state of the mind which easily bends to every proposal; that is a weakness, and not a virtue. Neither does it at all resemble that tame and passive temper which patiently bears insults and submits to injuries: that is a want of spirit, and argues a cowardly mind. This meekness is a Christian grace, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit: it is a stream from the fountain of all excellence. A good temper, a good education, and just views of religion, must concur in forming this blessed state of the mind. It becomes a principle which influences the whole life. Though consistent in all its operations with boldness and with spirit, yet its chief characteristics are goodness, and gentleness, and long-suffering. It looks with candour upon all; often condescends to the prejudices of the weak, and often forgives the errors of the foolish.

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But to give you a more particular view of it, we may place it in three capital lights, as it respects our general behaviour, our conduct to our enemies, and our conduct to our friends.

With respect to his general behaviour, the meek man looks upon all his neighbours with a candid eye. The two great maxims on which he proceeds, are, not to give offence, and not to take offence. He enters not with the keenness of passion into the contentions of violent men: he keeps aloof from the contagion of party-madness, and feels not the little passions which agitate little minds. He wishes, and he studies to allay the angry passions of the contending; to moderate the fierceness of the implacable; to reconcile his neighbours to one another; and, as far as lies in his power, to make all mankind one great family of friends. He will not indeed descend one step from the dignity of his character; nor will he sacrifice the dictates of his own conscience to any consideration whatever. But those points of obstinacy, which the world are apt to call points of honour, he will freely and chearfully give up for the good of society. He loves to live in peace with all mankind; but this desire too has its limits. He will keep no terms with those who keep no terms with virtue. A villain, of whatever station, of whatever religious profession, he detests as abomination. Thus you see that though softness, and gentleness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, are the chief characteristics of this virtue, yet, at the same time, it is very consistent with exertions of spirit. When it acts, it acts with vigour and decision. Moses, who has the testimony of the Divine Spirit, that he was the meekest man upon the face of the earth, yet when occasion presented itself, felt the influence of an elevated temper, and slew the Egyptian who was wounding his countryman. A meeker than Moses, even our Lord himself, though gentle and beneficent to all the sons of men, yet when the worldly-minded Jews profaned the temple, he was moved with just indignation, and drove the impious

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from the House of God. Nothing is often more calm and serene than the face of the heavens; but when guilt provokes the vengeance of the Most High, *forth comes the thunder* to blast the devoted head.

Such is the influence of meekness on our general behaviour. It ought also to regulate our conduct to our enemies. There is no principle which more strongly operates in human nature than the law of retaliation. This appears from the laws of all nations in the early state, which always ordained a punishment similar to the offence; eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and life for life. This appears also from our own feelings; when an injury is done us, we naturally long for revenge. Our heart tells us, that the person offending ought to suffer for the offence, and that the hand of him who was injured, must return the blow. Such are the dictates of the natural temper. But pursue this principle to its full extent, and you will see where it will end. One man commits an action which is injurious to you; you feel yourself aggrieved, and seek revenge. If you then retaliate upon him, he thinks he has received a new injury, which he also seeks to revenge; and thus a foundation is laid for reciprocal animosities without end. Did this principle and this practice become general, the earth would be a field of battle, life would be a scene of bloodshed, and hostilities would be immortal. Legislative wisdom hath provided a remedy for these disorders, and for this havoc which would be made of the human species. The right of private vengeance, which every man is born with, by common consent, and for the public good, is resigned into the hands of the civil magistrate. But there are many things which come not under the jurisdiction of the laws, and the cognizance of the magistrate, which tend to disturb the public peace, and set mankind at variance. Private animosities and little quarrels often arise, which might be productive of great disorder and detriment to society. Here, therefore, where legislative wisdom fails, religion steps in and checks the desire of vengeance,

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by enjoining that meekness of spirit, which disposes not to retaliate but to forgive. He therefore who possesses this spirit, will not answer a fool according to his folly. He will not depart from his usual maxims of conduct, because another has behaved improperly. Because his neighbour has been guilty of one piece of folly, he will not reckon that an inducement for him to be guilty of another. He will regulate his conduct by that standard of virtue which is within, and not by the behaviour of those around him. Accordingly, instead of harbouring animosities against those who have done him ill offices, he will be disposed to return good for evil: remembering that our Lord adds at the conclusion of this chapter, "I say unto you, "love your enemies, that ye may be the children of "your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh "the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

This meekness ought also to appear in our conduct towards our friends. In the present state of things, where human nature is so frail, where the very best have their weak side, and where so many events happen, which give occasion to the passions of men to shew themselves, there is great scope for the exercise of meekness and moderation. The faults of mankind in general, present a most unpleasant spectacle; but the failings of those we love, of those on whom we have conferred obligations, are apt to fill us with disgust and aversion. If it had been an enemy who had done this, I could have borne it. I would have expected no better; but thou, O my familiar friend, how shall I forgive thee? Such, at the time, is the language of nature. But better views, and more mature reflection, will teach us to throw a veil over those infirmities which are inseparable from the best natures, and to frame an excuse for those errors which proceed not from a bad heart.

In all these instances of meekness, Jesus of Nazareth left us an example, that we should follow his steps. In his general behaviour, he was meek and

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lowly, and condescending. He went about doing good, and received testimony from his enemies, that "he did all things well." To the errors of his friends, he was mild and gentle. When, moved by false zeal, in which they are still followed by many, who have the assurance to call themselves his disciples, they besought him to cause fire to descend from heaven, and consume a city, which believed not in his doctrines; all the rebuke he administered was, "Ye know not "what manner of spirit ye are of; the Son of Man "came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them." When he suffered his agony in the garden, in the hour and in the power of darkness, when he besought his disciples to watch with him in this dreadful scene, and when, instead of giving him comfort, they sunk unconcerned into sleep; instead of reproving them with severity, as their conduct deserved, he himself sought for an excuse for them: "The spirit indeed is "willing, but the flesh is weak." Though he was the friend of all mankind, yet he had enemies who sought his life. "I have done," said he, "many "good deeds among you, for which of these do you "stone me?" And when after persecuting him in his life, they brought him to the accursed death of the cross, his last words were, "Father forgive them, "for they know not what they do." Go thou! and do likewise.

The *second* thing proposed was, to shew the happiness annexed to this character, expressed here by "in-"heriting the earth." The meek are not indeed always to be great and opulent. Happiness, God be praised, is not annexed, and is not confined to the superior stations of life. There is a great difference between possessing the good things of life, and enjoying them. Whatever be his rank in life, the meek man bids the fairest chance for enjoying its advantages. A proud and passionate man puts his happiness in the power of every fool he meets with. A failure in duty or affection from a friend, want of respect from a dependant, and a thousand little circumstances, which a

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candid man would overlook, disturb his repose. He is perpetually on the fret, and his life is one scene of anxiety after another. On the other hand, the meek is not disturbed by the transactions of this scene of vanity. He is disposed to be pleased at all events. Instead of repining at the success of those around him, he rejoices in their prosperity, and is thus happy in the happiness of all his neighbours. Such are the blessed effects of meekness on the character. This beam from heaven kindles joy within the mind: it spreads a serenity over the countenance, and diffuses a kind of sunshine over the whole life. It puts us out of the power of accidents. It keeps the world at a due distance. It is armour to the mind, and keeps off the arrows of wrath. It preserves a sanctuary within, calm and holy, which nothing can disturb. Safe and happy in this asylum, you smile at the madness of the multitude. You hear the tempest raging around, and spending its strength in vain. As this virtue contributes to our happiness here, so it is also the best preparation for the happiness which is above. It is the very temper of the heavens. It is the disposition of the saints in light, and angels in glory; of that blessed society of friends who rejoice in the presence of God, and who, in mutual love, and joint hosannahs of praise, enjoy the ages of eternity.

To conclude: there is hardly a duty enjoined in the whole book of God, on which more stress seems often to be laid, than this virtue of meekness. "The Lord "loveth the meek.—The meek will he beautify with "his salvation.—He arises to save the meek of the "earth." Christ was sent to preach "glad tidings "to the meek." Upon this our Lord rests his own character. "Learn of me, for I am meek." In the epistles of Paul, there is a remarkable expression: "I "beseech you by the meekness and the gentleness "of Christ." The Holy Ghost, too, is called "the "Spirit of Meekness." Implore, then, O Christian! the assistance of the Divine Spirit that he may endow you with this virtue, and that you may shew in your life the meekness of wisdom.

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SERMON XI.

ISAIAH lviii. 7.

—Deal thy bread to the hungry:—hide not thyself from thine own flesh.

WHY there are so many evils in the world, is a question that has been agitated ever since man felt them. As God is possessed of all perfections, he could have created the universe without evil. To him, revolving the plan of his creation, every benevolent system presented itself; how came it then to pass that a Being, neither controuled in power, nor limited in wisdom, nor deficient in goodness, should create a world in which many evils are to be found, and much suffering to be endured? It becomes not us, with too presumptuous a curiosity, to assign the causes of the Divine conduct, or with too daring a hand, to draw aside the veil which covers the councils of the Almighty. But from this state of things we see many good effects arise. That industry, which keeps the world in motion; that society which, by mutual wants, cements mankind together; and that charity which is the bond of perfection, would neither have a place nor a name, but for the evils of human life. Thus, the enjoyments of life are grafted upon its wants; from natural evil arises moral good, and the sufferings of some, contribute to the happiness of all. Such being the state of human affairs, charity, or that disposition which leads us to supply the wants, and alleviate the sufferings of unhappy men, as well as bear

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with their infirmities, must be a duty of capital importance. Accordingly, it is enjoined in our holy religion, as being the chief of the virtues. There is no duty commanded in scripture, on which so much stress is laid as on the duty of charity. It is assigned as the test and criterion, by which we are to distinguish the disciples of Jesus, and it will be selected at the great day, as being that part of the character which is most decisive of the life, and according to which the last sentence is to turn. Charity, in its most comprehensive sense, signifies that disposition of mind, which, from a regard and gratitude to God, leads to do all the good in our power to man. Thus, it takes in a large circle, extending to all the virtues of the social, and many graces of the divine life. But as this would lead us into a wide field, all that I intend at present is, to consider that branch of charity which is called *Almsgiving*; and, in treating upon it, shall, in the *first* place, shew you how alms ought to be bestowed; and, *secondly*, give exhortations to the practice of this duty.

The *first* thing proposed was, to shew you what is the most proper method of bestowing charity. This inquiry is the more necessary, as, in the neighbourhood of great cities, we are always surrounded by the needy and importunate, and it is often difficult to distinguish those who are proper objects of charity from those who are not.

The best method of bestowing charity upon the healthy and the strong, is to give them employment. Almighty God created us all for industry and action. He never intended that any man upon the face of the earth should be idle. Accordingly, he hath placed us in a state which abounds with incentives to industry, and in which we must be active, in order to live. One half of the vices of men take their origin from idleness. He who has nothing to do is an easy prey to the tempter. Men must have occupation of one kind or other. If they are not employed in useful and beneficial labours, they will engage in those

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which are pernicious and criminal. To support the indolent, therefore, to keep those idle who are able to work, is acting contrary to the intention of God; is doing an injury to society, which claims a right to the services of all its members; is defrauding real objects of charity of that which is their proper due, and is fostering a race of sluggards to prey upon the vitals of a state. But he is a valuable member of society, and merits well of mankind, who, by devising means of employment for the industrious, delivers the public from an useless incumbrance, and makes those who otherwise would be the pests of society, useful subjects of the commonwealth. If it be merit, and no small merit it is, to improve the face of a country; to turn the desert into a fruitful field, and make the barren wastes break forth into singing; it is much more meritorious to cultivate the deserts in the moral world; to render those who might be otherwise pernicious members of society, happy in themselves, and beneficial to the state; to convert the talent that was wrapt up in a napkin, into a public use; and by opening a new source of industry, make life and health to circulate through the whole political body. Such a person is a true patriot, and does more good to mankind, than all the heroes and man-destroyers who fill the annals of history. The fame of the one is founded upon the numbers that he has slain; the glory of the other rises from the numbers that he preserves and makes happy.

Another act of charity, of equal importance, is to supply the wants of the really indigent and necessitous. If the industrious with all their efforts, are not able to earn a competent livelihood; if the produce of their labour be not proportionable to the demands of a numerous family; then they are proper objects of your charity. Nor can there be conceived a more pitiable case, than that of those whose daily labour, after the utmost they can do, will not procure daily bread for themselves and their household. To consider a parent who has toiled the live-long day in

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hardship, who yet at night, instead of finding rest, shall find a pain more insupportable than all his fatigues abroad: the cravings of a numerous and a helpless family, which he cannot satisfy: this is sufficient to give the most lively touches of compassion to every heart that is not past feeling. Nor can there be an exercise of charity better judged, than administering to the wants of those who are at the same time industrious and indigent.

Another class of men that demand our charity, is the aged and feeble, who, after a life of hard labour, after being worn out with the cares and business of life, are grown unfit for further business, and who add poverty to the other miseries of old age. What can be more worthy of us, than thus to contribute to their happiness, who have been once useful, and are still willing to be so; to allow them not to feel the want of those enjoyments, which they are not now able to procure; to be a staff to their declining days; to smooth the furrows in the faded cheek, and to make the winter of old age wear the aspect of spring?

Children also bereft of their parents, orphans cast upon the care of Providence, are signal objects of compassion. To act the part of a father to those upon whose helpless years no parent of their own ever smiled; to rear up the plant that was left alone to perish in the storm; to fence the tender bloom against the early blasts of vice; to watch and superintend its growth, till it flourishes and brings forth fruit: this is a noble and beneficial employment well adapted to a generous mind. What can be more delightful than thus to train up the young to happiness and virtue; to conduct them, with a safe but gentle hand, through the dangerous stages of infancy and youth; to give them, at an age when their minds are most susceptible of good impressions, early notices of religion, and render them useful members of society, who, if turned adrift, and left defenceless, would, without

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the extraordinary grace of God, become a burden and a nuisance to the world.

But there is a class of the unfortunate not yet mentioned, who are the greatest objects of all; those, who, after having been accustomed to ease and plenty, are, by some unavoidable reverse of fortune, by no fault or folly of theirs, condemned to bear, what they are least able to bear, the galling load of poverty; who, after having been perhaps fathers to the fatherless, in the day of their prosperity, are now become the objects of that charity which they were wont so liberally to dispense. These persons plead the more strongly for our relief, because they are the least able to reveal their misery, and make their wants known. Let these, therefore, in a peculiar manner, partake the bounty of the liberal and open hand. Let your goodness descend to them in secret, and like the Providence of Heaven, conceal the hand which sends them relief, that their blushes may be spared while their wants are supplied.

Concerning one class of the indigent vagrants and common beggars, I have hitherto said nothing. About these your own observation and experience, will enable you to judge. Some of them are real and deserving objects of your compassion. Of others, the greatest want is the want of industry and virtue.

The *second* thing proposed was, to give exhortations to the practice of this duty. This duty is so agreeable to the common notions of mankind, that every one condemns the mean and sordid spirit of that wretch whom God has blessed with abundance, and consequently with the power of blessing others, and who is yet relentless to the cries of the poor and miserable. We look with contempt and abhorrence upon a man who is ever amassing riches, and never bestowing them; as greedy as the sea, and yet as barren as the shore. Numbers, it is true, think they have done enough in declaiming against the practice of such persons; for upon the great and the opulent they think the whole burden of this duty ought to rest; but for

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themselves, being somewhat of a lower class, they desire to be excused. Their circumstances, they say, are but just easy, to answer the demands of their family, and therefore, they plead inability, and expect to be exempted from the performance of this duty. Before this excuse will be of any avail, it behoves them to consider, whether they do not indulge themselves in expences unsuitable to their rank and condition. Imaginary wants are boundless, and charity will never begin, if it be postponed till these have an end. Every man, whether rich or poor, is concerned in this duty, in proportion to his circumstances: and he that has little, is as strictly bound to give something out of that little, as he that hath more is obliged to give more. What advantage was it to the poor widow, that she, by giving her one mite into the treasury, could exercise a nobler charity than all the rich had done? The smallest gift may be the greatest bounty.

The practice of this duty, therefore, is incumbent upon all. To the performance of it you are drawn by that pity and compassion which are implanted in the heart. Compassion is the call of our Father in heaven to us his children, to put us upon relieving our brethren in distress. This is an affection wisely interwoven in our frame by the Author of our nature, that whereas abstracted reason is too sedentary and remiss a counsellor, we might have a more instant and vigorous pleader in our breasts, to excite us to acts of charity. As far, indeed, as it is ingrafted in us, it is mere instinct; but when we cultivate and cherish it, till we love mercy, when we dwell upon every tender sentiment that opens our mind and enlarges our heart, then it becomes a virtue. Whosoever thou art whose heart is hardened and waxed gross, put thyself in the room of some poor unfriended wretch, beset perhaps with a large family, broken with misfortunes, and pining with poverty, whilst silent grief preys upon his vitals; in such a case what wouldst thou think it reasonable thy rich neighbours should do? That, like the Priest and the Levite, they

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should look with an eye of indifference, and pass by on the other side; or, like the good Samaritan, pour balm into thy wounded mind? Be thyself the judge! and whatever thou thinkest reasonable thy neighbours should do to thee, go thou and do likewise unto them.

Consider next the pleasure derived from benevolence. Mean and illiberal is the man whose soul the good of himself can entirely engross. True benevolence, extensive as the light of the sun, takes in all mankind. It is not indeed in your power to support all the indigent, incurable, and aged; it is not in your power to train up in the paths of virtue many friendless and fatherless children: but if, as far as the compass of your power reaches, nothing is deprived of the influence of your bounty, and where your power falls short, you are cordially affected to see good works done by others; those charities which you could not do, will be placed to your account. To grasp thus the whole system of reasonable beings, with an overflowing love, is to possess the greatest of all earthly enjoyments, is to make approaches to the happiness of higher natures, and anticipate the joy of the world to come. For it is impossible, that the man who, actuated by a principle of obedience to his Creator, has cherished each generous and liberal movement of the soul, with a head ever studious to contrive, a heart ever willing to promote, and hands ever ready to distribute to the good of his fellow-creatures, should, notwithstanding, be doomed to be an associate for ever with accursed spirits, in a place where benevolence never shed its kindly beams, but malice and anguish, and blackness of darkness, reign for ever and ever. No, the riches which we have given away will abide with us for ever. The same habit of love will accompany us to another world. The bud which hath opened here, will blow into full expansion above, and beautify the paradise in the heavens.

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SERMON XII.

MATTHEW v. 19.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.

THE Roman Catholics divide sins into two classes; the venial and the mortal. In the first class, they include those slight offences which, as they say, are too inconsiderable to offend the Deity; and, in the second, those great and aggravated transgressions which expose men to the Divine vengeance in the world to come. Although this distinction, which overthrows the law of morality, is abjured by all Protestants, yet something like it is still retained by great numbers of men. What the Papists call venial sins, *they* call sins of infirmity, human failings, imperfections inseparable from men. And their own favourite vices, whatever they be, they call by these names. Cruel is the condition of the human kind, say they, and rigorous the spirit of the Christian law, if we are to lie under such terrible restrictions; if breaking one of the least commandments shall exclude us from the kingdom of God. Will the Great Creator be offended by a few trivial transgressions; with little liberties, which serve only for amusement? If others take a general toleration, shall we not have an indulgence at particular times? If we are prohibited from turning back in the paths of virtue, may we not make a random excursion? If we are not allowed to taste the fruits, may we not at least crop the blos-

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soms of the forbidden tree? While the waters of pleasure flow so near, and look so tempting, shall we not be permitted to taste and live? Will the Great Judge of the world condemn us to eternal punishment, for the indulgence of a wandering inclination, for the gratification of a sudden appetite, for a look, a word, or a thought?

As this is the apology of vice, which at one time or another all of you make to yourselves, I shall now shew you the dangerous nature and fatal tendency of those offences you call *little sins*. And, in entering upon the subject, Christians, I must observe to you, that the attempt to join together the joys of religion and the pleasures of sin, is altogether impracticable. The Divine law regulates the enjoyments, as well as the business of life. You are never to forget one moment that you are Christians. The joys which you are allowed to partake of, are in the train of virtue. While you are pilgrims in the wilderness, if you return to Egypt again, you forfeit your title to the promised land. You have left the dominions of sin, you have come into another kingdom; and if now you revolt to the foe, you are guilty of treason, and may expect to meet with the punishment which treason deserves. How shall we distinguish, then, you say, between the sins of infirmity, into which the best may fall, and the violation of those least commandments which exclude from the kingdom of God? I answer, the text makes the distinction. Sins of infirmity proceed from frailty and surprise. The temptation comes upon men unexpected; the foe meets them unprepared; and, in such cases, the most circumspect may be off their guard, and the best natures may fall. But those sins which exclude from the kingdom of God, are from deliberation and full consent of the mind. The persons who commit them, as the text says, "teach men so;" that is, they justify themselves in what they do, and sin upon a plan. Their evil intentions are not occasional and transient, but permanent and governing; they sleep and wake

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upon their bad designs, and carry them along in their going out, and coming in; and thus forming evil habits, make their lives a system of iniquity. Whoever does so, though it be only in the violation of what he reckons the least commandment, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; that is, shall be excluded altogether from it.

It is proposed, at this time, to set before you the evil nature and dangerous tendency of the least transgressions. And, in the *first* place, it may be observed, that it is a series of little actions that marks the characters of men. Human life is not composed of great events, but of minute occurrences; and it is not from a man's extraordinary exertions, but from his ordinary conduct, that we form our judgment of his character. When a great event is transacting, a man is on his guard, he is prepared to act his part well, and often, on such occasions, in the hour of exhibition he appears to the world a different person from what he really is. But in the series of little actions, in the detail of ordinary life, the turn of mind discovers itself, the temper unfolds, the character appears. It is then, when a man is himself, the mask falls off, and the true countenance is displayed. Human life, then, being a circle of petty transactions, and the temper of men being known from their conduct in little affairs, our character for virtue will depend on our performance of what the world calls the least of the commandments. This is not peculiar to virtue. What is it that constitutes the happiness of domestic life? Not the singular and uncommon situations, but the familiar and the ordinary; not the striking events that fly abroad in the mouths of the people, but the daily round of little things which are never mentioned. A miser may have a feast, and be a miser still; he only is a happy man who has his enjoyments every day. With very great talents, and without any remarkable vice, a man may become a most disagreeable member of society, by his neglect of the attentions and civilities and decorum of life. In like man-

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ner, without being guilty of any enormous sin, by the habitual neglect of inferior duties, and by the practice of little offences, a man may sin unto death.

A good life is one of those pictures, whose perfection arises from the nice and the minute strokes. It is not one blazing star, but the host of lesser lights, which forms the beauty of the heavens. In like manner, how does the Great Judge at the last day decide the fate, and determine the characters of men? You reckon sins of omission but little sins, yet, on account of these, the sentence of everlasting condemnation is passed. Because ye gave no bread to the hungry, no water to the thirsty, and no raiment to the naked, relieved not the oppressed, and visited not the prisoner, therefore, "depart into everlasting fire, prepared for "the devil and his angels." In like manner, he determines the character of the righteous, not from the striking and splendid virtues which they exhibited to the world, but from the performance of the inferior duties of daily life: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the "foundation of the world." Why? Is it for the splendid works of piety, for building temples to the Deity, or dying as martyrs to the Christian faith? No. Men may build temples, without love to the Deity; they may die as martyrs, without real religion; but because ye have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and raiment to the naked; actions of life in which ye must have been sincere, because ye never expected that such actions would be heard of, and the practice of them grew so much into habit, that ye scarcely thought it a virtue to perform them.

Secondly, These little sins attack the authority of the Divine Legislator as much, or perhaps more, than great sins. Evil thoughts are as expressly prohibited in the Divine law as evil deeds. The same God who says, thou shalt not kill, says also, thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. What sentiment must you entertain of the Majesty in the Heavens, when

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his command cannot restrain you from the commission of the least sin? Hath not God forbidden the impure desire and the malicious intention, as well as adultery and murder? And is it not as much his will that he should be obeyed in *those* commandments as in *these?* Have you a dispensation granted you to take the name of God in vain in common conversation, any more than you have to swear falsely before a civil magistrate? Have you more liberty allowed you to wound your neighbour's character, than you have to shed his blood? No; the prohibition extends to the one as well as to the other. The same authority that forbids the action, forbids the desire. The same law which says, thou shalt not steal, says also, thou shalt not covet. But you say, that the indulgences you plead for, are with regard to things in their own nature indifferent. Alas! if you had proper ideas of a God possessed of infinite perfection, nothing that he commands or forbids would appear indifferent. To you it may appear a matter of little moment or concern, what the strain of your thoughts is, or how the tenor of your conversation runs; but when you learn that your thoughts are known in heaven, and that by your words you shall be justified or condemned, these assume a more serious form, and become of infinite importance. But if the things for which you beg an indulgence, are in their own nature small, why do you not abstain from them? If the prophet had commanded you a great thing, you might have murmured against the precept; but when he only enjoins what you yourselves reckon a little thing, what pretence have you for a complaint? In place of being an excuse, this is an aggravation of your offence. With your own mouth you condemn yourself. Can there be a stronger proof of a degenerate nature and a stubborn mind, that this inclination to disobey your Creator, in things that you reckon of little consequence? What can shew a heart hardened against God, and set against the Heavens, so much as this refractory and rebellious disposition

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which leads men to violate the Majesty of the law, to insult the authority of the Lawgiver, to risk the vengeance of the Omnipotent, and to pour contempt on all the perfections of the Divine nature, rather than part with what they themselves reckon small and inconsiderable.

In the *third* place, you may contract as much guilt by breaking the least of the commandments, as by breaking the greatest of them. You start back and are affrighted at the approach of great iniquity; the heart revolts from a temptation to flagrant sins; yet thousands of lesser sins, evil thoughts, malicious words, petty oaths, commodious lies, little deceits, you make no scruple to commit every day. But the guilt of such reiterated sins is as great, or greater, than that of any single sin. To hate your neighbour in your heart without cause, to take every opportunity of blasting his character, and defeating his designs, makes you as guilty in the Divine eye, as if you had imbrued your hands in his blood. To use false weights, and a deceitful balance, is as criminal as a direct act of theft. He who defrauds his neighbours daily in the course of his business, is a greater sinner before God, and a worse member of society, than he who once in his life, robs on the highway. The frequency of these little sins makes the guilt great, and the danger extreme. The constant operation of evil deeds impairs the strength of the soul, and shakes the foundation on which virtue rests. Wave succeeding wave undermines the whole fabric of virtue, and makes the building of God to fall. The thorns, which at first could scarcely be seen, spread by degrees over the field, and choak the good seed. The locusts which Moses brought over the land of Egypt, appeared at first a contemptible multitude; but in a little time, like a cloud, they darkened the air; as a mighty army, they covered the face of the earth; they devoured the herb of the field, the fruit of the tree, and every green thing, and turned what was formerly like the garden of Eden into a desolate wilderness. Thus these little sins in-

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crease as they advance; they blast where they enter; by degrees they make the spiritual life decay; they lay waste the new creation, and turn the intellectual world into a chaos, without form, and void of order. And yet we are not on our guard against them. It fareth with us as it did with the Israelites of old. We tremble more at one Goliah than at the whole army of the Philistines. One gross scandalous sin makes us recoil and start back; and yet we venture on the guilt of numberless smaller sins, without hesitation or remorse. What signifies it whether you die of many small wounds, or by one great wound? What great difference does it make, whether the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings are kindled by many sparks, or by one fire-brand? When God shall reckon up against you at the great day the many thousand malicious thoughts, slanderous words, deceits, oaths, imprecations, lies, that you have been guilty of, the account will be as dreadful, and the wrath as insupportable, as if atrocious crimes had stood upon the list.

In the *fourth* place, these little offences make life a chain, and a continuation of sins, so that conversion becomes almost impossible. Often, upon the commission of a gross sin, a sober interval succeeds; serious reflection has its hour; sorrow and contrition of heart take their turn; then is the crisis of a man's character; and many improving this favourable opportunity, have risen greater from their fall. But if these little sins then come in; if between the commission of one gross sin and another, there intervenes a constant neglect of God, a hardness of heart, a vanity of imagination, and unfruitfulness of life, you still add to the number of your sins, and treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath. Such little sins fill up the void spaces; so that, by this means, life becomes an uninterrupted and unbroken chain of iniquity. Thus you render yourselves incapable of reformation, and put yourselves out of the power of Divine grace. How is it possible that you can ever come within the reach

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of mercy? How can the voice of God reach your heart? He speaks to you in the majestic silence of his works; but you reckon it no sin at all to shut your ears against the voice which comes from heaven to earth, and reaches from one end of the world to the other. He speaks to you by the voice of his providence; but you reckon it of little moment to regard the doings of the Lord. He speaks to you in the Holy Scriptures; but you reckon the precept to read these one of the least commandments. He speaks to you in the ordinances of his own institution, but alas! how many hold it a little sin to absent themselves from these altogether! And how many of those who attend, think it but a little sin to spend their time as unprofitably as if absent! He speaks to you with the still small voice; his Spirit whispers to your spirit. He seeks to enter in by your thoughts; but vanity, and folly, and vice, swarms of little sins, stop up the passage. Thus every corner of life is filled up. Every avenue to the heart is shut. You nowhere lie open to the impression of Divine grace, and the soul is so full, that there is no room for the Holy Spirit to enter.

In the *last* place, these lesser sins infallibly lead to greater. There is a fatal progress in vice. One sin naturally leads to another: the first step leads to the second, till, by degrees, you come to the bottom of the precipice. Deceit, duplicity, dissimulation in different matters, which many persons who maintain what is called a decent character, make no scruple to employ, have a tendeney to render you insincere on more important occasions, and may gradually destroy your character of integrity altogether. He who tells falsehoods for his own conveniency, will, in the natural course of things, become a common liar.

The spirit of gaming perhaps you reckon a small sin. When gaming is only an amusement, it is innocent; but whenever it goes farther, whenever it is made a serious business, and the love of it becomes a passion, farewell to tranquillity and virtue; then suc-

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ceed days of vanity and nights of care; dissipation of life, corruption of manners, inattention to domestic affairs, arts of deceit, lying, cursing, and perjury. At a distance poverty, with contempt at her heels, and in the rear of all, despair bringing a halter in her hand.

Thus have I set before you the evil nature and the dangerous tendency of the least transgressions. And do you ask an indulgence in little sins, when you see how fatal they are? Do you still ask to make an excursion from the path of virtue? Such an excursion, if you make, you will fall in with the road to perdition. Do you still wish to taste the waters which unlawful pleasure presents to your eye? Taste them you may; but be assured that there is poison in the stream, and death in the cup. Alas! if we calmly indulge ourselves in the cool commission of the least sin, who knows *when* or *where* we shall stop? If once we yield to the temptation, in whose power is it to say, hitherto shall I go, but no further? Many persons at their first setting out, would have trembled at the very *thought* of these sins, which in time, and by an easy transition, they have been brought to commit with boldness. The traitor consigned to eternal infamy, Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord of glory, had at first only his covetousness to answer for. Fly, therefore, I beseech you, fly from the first approaches of sin. Guard your innocence, as you would guard your life. If you advance one step over the line which separates the way of life from the way of death, down you sink to the bottomless abyss. Come not then near the territories of perdition. Stand back and survey the torrent which is now so mighty and overflowing, that it deluges the land, and you will find it to proceed from a small contemptible brook. Examine the conflagration that has laid a city in ashes, and you will find it to arise from a single spark.

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SERMON XIII.

HEBREWS xii. 24.

—The blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.

REASON and philosophy have applied their powers to external objects with wonderful success. They have traced the order of nature, and explained the elements of things. By observation and experience, they have ascertained the laws of the universe; they have counted the number of the stars; and following the footsteps of the Almighty, have discovered some of the great lines of that original plan according to which he created the world. But when they approach the region of spirit and intelligence, they stop short in their discoveries. The mind eludes its own search. The Author of our nature has checked our career in such studies, to teach us, that action and moral improvement, not speculation and inquiry, are the ends of our being. Accordingly, the moral part of our frame is the easiest understood. Having been placed here by Providence for great and noble purposes, virtue is the law of our nature. This being the great rule in the moral world, God has enforced it in various ways. He hath endowed us with a sense or faculty, which, viewing actions in themselves, without regard to their consequences, approves or disapproves them. He hath endowed us with another sense, which passes sentence upon actions according to their consequences in society. He hath given us a third, which, removing human actions from life, and the world altogether, carries them to a higher tribunal

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The first, which is the *moral sense*, belongs to us as individuals; is instinctive in all its operations; approves of virtue as being moral beauty; and disapproves of vice as being moral deformity. The second, which is the sense of *utility*, belongs to us as members of society, is directed in its operations by reason, and passes sentence upon actions according as they are favourable or pernicious to the public good. The third, which is *conscience*, belongs to us as subjects of the Divine government, is directed in its operations by the word of God, and considers human actions as connected with a future state of rewards and punishments. It is this which properly belongs to religion. Upon this faculty of conscience, the happiness or misery of mankind in a great measure depends. A good conscience is a continual feast, and proves a spring of joy amidst the greater distresses. A conscience troubled with remorse, or haunted with fear, is the greatest of all human evils. Accordingly, the Christian religion, which adapts itself to every state of our nature, and carries consolation to the mind in every distress, has presented to the weary and heavy laden sinner, "the "blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things "than the blood of Abel." The meaning of which expression is this: As the blood of Abel, crying to Heaven for vengeance, filled the mind of Cain with horror, and as every sin is attended with remorse; so the blood of Jesus is of power to deliver the mind from this remorse, and restore peace of conscience to the true penitent.

In further treating upon this subject, I shall describe to you the nature of that remorse which is the companion of a guilty mind; and next the deliverance which the Gospel gives us from it, by means of "the blood of sprinkling." In the *first* place, then, let us consider the nature of that remorse which is the companion of a guilty mind.

Almighty God having created man after his own image, intended him for moral excellence and perfection. Hence all his passions were originally set on

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the side of virtue, and all his faculties tended to heaven. Conscience is still the least corrupted of all the powers of the soul. It keeps a faithful register of our deeds, and passes impartial sentence upon them. It is appointed the judge of human life; is invested with authority and dominion over the whole man, and is armed with stings to punish the guilty. These are the sanctions and enforcements of that eternal law to which we are subjected. For even in our present fallen state, we are so framed by the Author of our nature, that moral evil can no more be committed than natural evil can be suffered, without anguish and disquiet. As pain follows the infliction of a wound, as certainly doth remorse attend the commission of sin. Conscience may be lulled asleep for a while, but it will one day vindicate its rights. It will seize the sinner in an hour when he is not aware; will blast him perhaps in the midst of his mirth, and put him to the torture of an accusing mind. For the truth of this observation, let me appeal to your own experience. Did you ever indulge a criminal passion; did you ever allow yourselves in any practice which you knew to be unlawful, without feeling an inward struggle and strong reluctance of mind before the attempt, and bitter pangs of remorse after the commission? Though no eye saw what you did? though you were sure that no mortal could discover it, did not shame and confusion secretly lay hold of you? Was not your own conscience instead of a thousand witnesses? Did it not plead with you face to face, and upbraid you for your transgressions? Have not some of you perhaps, at this instant, a sensible experience of the truths which I am now pressing upon you? In these days of retirement and self-examination, did you not feel the operation of that powerful principle? Did not your sins then rise up before you in sad remembrance? Has not the image of them pursued you into the house of God? And are not your minds now stung with some of that regret which followed upon the first commission?

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My brethren, there is no escaping from a guilty mind. You can avoid some evils, by mingling in society; you can avoid others, by retiring into solitude; but this enemy, this tormentor within, is never to be avoided. If thou retirest into solitude, it will meet thee there, and haunt thee like a ghost. If thou goest into society, it will go with thee; it will mar the entertainment, and dash the untasted cup from thy trembling hand. Whilst the sinner indulges his vain imagination; whilst he solaces himself with the prospect of pleasures rising upon pleasures never to have an end, and says to his soul, be of good cheer, thou hast happiness laid up for many years, a voice comes to his heart that strikes him with sudden fear, and turns the vision of joy to a scene of horror. Whilst the proud and impious Balshazzar enjoys the feast with his princes, his concubines, and his wives; whilst he carouses in the consecrated vessels of the sanctuary; in a moment the scene changes; the handwriting on the wall turns the house of mirth into a house of mourning; the countenance of the king changes, and his knees smite one against another, whilst the Prophet, in awful accents, pronounces his doom; pronounces that his hour is come, and that his kingdom is departed from him.

It is in adversity that the pangs of conscience are most severely felt. When affliction humbles the native pride of the heart, and gives a man leisure to reflect upon his former ways, his past life rises up to view; having now no interest in the sins which he committed, they appear in all their native deformity, and fill his mind with anguish and remorse. Men date their misfortunes from their faults, and acknowledge their sin when they meet with the punishment. The sons of Jacob felt no remorse when they sold their brother to be a slave; they had delivered themselves from the foolish fear that he was one day to be greater than they; they congratulated themselves upon the mighty deliverance. But the very first misfortune which befel them, a little rough usage in

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a foreign land, awakened their guilty fears, and they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concern-"ing our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his "soul when he besought us, and we would not hear, "*therefore* is this distress come upon us."

But that the prosperous sinner may not presume upon impunity from the lashes of a guilty mind, and to shew you that no situation, however exempted from adversity, and that no station, however exalted, is proof against the horrors of remorse, I shall adduce two remarkable instances of persons who felt all the horrors of a guilty mind, without meeting with any judgments to awaken them. The first is that of Cain, referred to in the text. When the offering of Abel ascended acceptable and well-pleasing to God, Cain was seized with envy; from that moment he meditated vengeance against him, and at last imbrued his hands in the blood of his brother. There was then no law against murder; and if, antecedent to law, there is no original sense of right and wrong implanted in the mind, if conscience, as some affirm, was not a natural, but an acquired power, the mind of Cain might have been at ease; he might have enjoyed the calm and the serenity of innocence. But when he was brought to the tribunal of conscience, was his mind at ease? Did he enjoy the calm and the serenity of innocence? No. He cried out in the bitterness of remorse, "My punishment is greater than I can "bear." What punishment did he complain of? There was then no punishment denounced against murder, and the Lord expressly secured him from corporal punishment. But he had that within, to which all external punishments are light. He was extended on the rack of reflection, and he lay upon the torture of the mind. Hell was kindled within him, and he felt the first gnawings of the worm that never dies.

Another remarkable instance of the dominion of conscience, we have in the history of Herod. John the Baptist, the harbinger of our Lord, sojourned a

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while in the court of Herod. This faithful monitor spared not sin in the person of a king, but reproved him openly for his vices. Herod, although he disliked, yet he respected the prophet, and feared the multitude who believed in his doctrines. But on Herod's birth day, when the daughter of Herodias danced before him, he made a sudden vow, that he would grant her whatsoever she desired. Being instructed of her mother, she asked the head of John the Baptist. One of the common arts by which we deceive our consciences is to set one duty against another. Hence sin is generally committed under the appearance of some virtue, and hence the greatest crimes which have ever troubled the world, have been committed under the name, and under the shew of religion. Such was the crime which we are now considering. The observance of an oath, has, among all nations, been regarded as a religious act; and here a fair opportunity offered itself to one who only waited for such an opportunity, to make religion triumph at the expence of virtue. If Herod had no inclination to destroy the Prophet, and no interest in his death, his conscience would have told him that murder was an atrocious crime, which no consideration could alleviate, nor excuse; it would have told him that vows, which it is unlawful to make, it is also unlawful to keep; but Herod was already a party in the cause; he determined to get quit of his enemy; he satisfied his conscience with some vain pretences, and gave orders to behead the Baptist. But were all his anxieties and sorrows buried with the Prophet? No: The grave of the Prophet was the grave of his peace. Neither the splendour of majesty, nor the guards of state, nor the noise of battle, nor the shouts of victory could drown the alarms of conscience. That mangled form was ever present to his eyes; the cry of blood was ever in his ears. Hence, when our Saviour appeared in a public character, and began to teach and to work miracles, Herod cried out, in the horrors of a guilty mind, "It is

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" John the Baptist whom I slew; he is risen from the " dead."

How great, my brethren, is the power and dominion of conscience! The Almighty appointed it his vicegerent in the world; he invested it with his own authority, and said, " Be thou a God unto man." Hence it has power over the course of time. It can recal the past; it can anticipate the future. It reaches beyond the limits of this globe; it visits the chambers of the grave; it re-animates the bodies of the dead; exerts a dominion over the invisible regions, and summons the inhabitants of the eternal world to haunt the slumbers, and shake the hearts of the wicked. Tremble then, O man! whosoever thou art, who art conscious to thyself of unrepented sins. Peace of mind thou shalt never enjoy. Repose, like a false friend, shall fly from thee. Thou shalt be driven from the presence of the Lord like Adam when he sinned, and be terrified when thou hearest his voice, as awful when it comes from within, as when it came from without. The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity; but a spirit wounded by remorse who can bear?

The *second* thing proposed, was, to shew you the deliverance which the Gospel gives us from remorse, by means of the " blood of sprinkling." This expression alludes to the ceremonial method of expiating sin under the Old Testament, by offering sacrifices, and sprinkling the blood of the victim upon the altar. But, as this was in itself only typical of Christ, how welcome to the soul is the glad tidings of the Messiah, who did, what these sacrifices could not do, —actually save his people from their sins! By the atonement and blood of Christ, the sins of men have been completely expiated. It is the voice of the Gospel of Peace, " Take, eat, and live for ever." What relief will it give to the wounded mind, to hear of the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel! The Gospel being published to the world, and the offers of mercy

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through a Redeemer being made to all men, the sincere penitent accepts these offers, and flies for refuge to the hope set before him. Then Jesus saves his people from their sins, he heals the mind which was wounded by remorse, and bestows that peace which the world cannot give, and cannot take away. There is joy in heaven, we are told, over a sinner that repenteth, and the joy of the heavens is communicated to the returning penitent. When he beholds God reconciled to him in the face of his Son; when he hears, in secret, the blessed Jesus whispering in sweet strains to his heart, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins "are forgiven thee," he is filled with peace and with joy; with peace which passeth all understanding; with joy which is unspeakable and glorious. His sins being forgiven, he is accepted in the Beloved. He is an heir of immortality, and his name is written in heaven; to him is opened the fountain of life. He has a title to all the pleasures which are at God's right hand; to the treasures of heaven, and to the joys of eternity. He looks forward with a well-grounded hope, to that happy day, when he shall take possession of the inheritance on high; he anticipates the delights of the world to come; and breaks forth into strains of exultation, similar to those transports of assurance uttered by the Apostle, "Who "shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemn-"eth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen "again, and who now sitteth and intercedeth for us "at God's right hand."

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SERMON XIV.

MARK viii. 36.

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

THERE is not a person in this assembly, but who assents immediately to the truth of the maxim implied in the text. You all agree, that religion is the one thing needful, and that above all things you ought to seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. But there is a wide difference between the assent of the mind to the truth of this principle, and that deep conviction of its importance, which, in Scripture, obtains the name of faith; sufficient to influence the heart, and to determine the life. A great part of mankind seem to have no steady belief that they are endowed with souls which are immortal; an eternity to come is with them merely a matter of speculation, and their faith in a future world has little more influence upon their lives, than their idea of a distant country, which they are never to see. Hence spiritual and eternal things are heard with little emotion or concern, while they are delivered in the house of God. Some can give themselves up to listlessness; and others soon lose all remembrance of what they have heard, in the next amusement, or in the news of the day. Even He who spoke as never man spake, and while he discoursed on points of such importance as the loss of the soul, had occasion often to take up the complaint, that in vain he stretched out his hands all day long to a disobedient people.

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To call your contemplation, then, to these subjects, for they need no more but to be considered aright, in order to be felt, I shall endeavour to shew you the value of the soul, from its native dignity, from its capacity of improvement, from its immortality, and from its unalterable state at death.

Let us consider then, in the *first* place, the native importance and dignity of the human soul. It is the mind chiefly that is the man. Our souls properly are ourselves. The bodily organs are the ministers of the mind; by these it sees and hears, and holds a correspondence with external things. It is by our souls that we hold our station in the scale of being; that we rank above the animal world, and claim alliance with superior and immortal natures. As the soul is superior to the body, so intellectual pleasures exceed the sensual; as heaven is higher than the earth, so the joys of a heavenly origin are superior to earthly enjoyments. I mean not in the common way, to depreciate temporal possessions, as being insignificant in themselves, and unworthy the cares or labours of a wise man. Such discourse is mere declamation; it is against nature, contrary to truth, and makes no impression at all. Let all the value be set upon wealth and temporal possessions which they deserve, as affording a defence from many evils to which poverty is liable; as ministering to the convenience, the consolation, and the enjoyment of life; as supporting a station with decency and dignity in the world; and as accompanied with an importance, by which a good man may find much pleasure arising to himself, and have the power of doing much good to his fellow-creatures; let all the value which reason allows, be set upon temporal acquisitions and enjoyments, still they are inferior to those of an intellectual and moral kind: still the maxim remains true, that he would be an infinite loser who should gain the whole world and lose his own soul. "Thou hast put more gladness "into my heart," saith the Psalmest, "than worldly "men know, when their corn, and their wine, and

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their oil abound." And do not your own feeling and experience bear witness to this truth? Who will not acknowledge that there is no more excellence in wisdom, than in mere animal strength? Who will not own that there is more happiness in the improving conversation of the wise, than in the tumultuous uproar of the debauched and licentious? Are the rays of light as pleasant to the eye as the radiations of truth to the mind? Have sensual gratifications a charm for the soul, equal to intellectual and moral joys? While the former soon pall upon the appetite, are not the latter a perpetual feast? While the remembrance of the one is attended with no pleasure, is not the remembrance of the other a repetition of the enjoyment?

But great as the dignity of the human soul is, it may be still greater; for, in the *second* place, it possesses a capacity of improvement. This constitutes one essential difference between the intellectual and the material world. All material things soon reach the end of their progress, and arrive at a point beyond which they cannot go. Instinct grows apace, and the animal is soon complete in all its faculties and powers. Man ripens more slowly, because he ripens for immortality. Those enjoyments and pursuits of man also, which do not belong to him as an immortal being, come soon to their period. Amusement, when continued long, becomes a fatigue. In pleasure there is a point, beyond which, if it be carried, it is pleasure no more, it turns into pain. The pursuits of greatness, too, are very limited, and the race of honour is soon run. After many a weary step, the votary of ambition finds that he has been running in a circle, and that he is come to the self-same point from which he set out. Mind, mind alone, contains in itself the principle of progression and improvement without end. There is no ultimate power in the progress of man: there is no termination to the career of an immortal spirit. The dominions of earthly greatness are circumscribed within narrow limits, and the hero has often wished for new countries to conquer: but the empire of the mind has no limit nor boun-

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dary; and we can never arrive at that period, when we may say, hitherto can we go, but no farther. Never have we learned so much, but we may learn more. Suppose life never so long, if the powers remain, new paths to science may be struck out, fresh accessions of knowledge may be made. And we know from experience, that the largest measure of knowledge proves no burden to the mind, nor weakens its powers; but that, on the contrary, the capacity enlarges with the acquisition, and that men, the more they have learned, the more apt they are to learn; the less is their labour, and the easier their progress.

Improvements in goodness keep pace with improvements in wisdom. Repeated acts of obedience grow into habit; the penitent is confirmed in righteousness, and he that is holy becomes holier still. From the fulness which is in God, he adds grace to grace. The day of small things shineth more and more, and that day is succeeded by no night. The pilgrims, who at first set out feeble and faint, grow vigorous as they advance, going forward from strength to strength; ascending from one degree of goodness to another, they approach the everlasting hills, and coming within the sphere of heaven, they inhale the spirit of their native region, they feel the attractions of the uncreated beauty, they receive a foretaste of the fruits of life, and, with hearts already full of heaven, and with tongues already tuned to the songs above, they put on the brightness of angels, and enter into the mansions of paradise.

In the *third* place, the value of the soul will farther appear, if we consider that it is immortal. All human things soon come to an end. Temporal possessions, and earthly greatness, have a short date. The world itself is for ever changing; the fashion thereof passes away, and he who knows it in one age, in the next would not know it again. How short lived are the enjoyments of this mortal state! Although the flowers of transient joy, more hardy than the gourd of Jonah, may outlive the heat of the morning, and

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glow amid the blaze of noon, yet when the blast of evening comes, they are nipt and wither away. Ambition too has its day, and often a short one. Its votaries seem to be raised, but the more sensibly to feel their fall. The same whirlwind that snatches them up from the crowd, brings them down at even with tenfold fury. Not to mention these more violent revolutions, its natural period soon comes. He who runs the race of human glory, is lost in the very dust that is raised around him. And such is the sudden end of all terrestrial enjoyments, when, after the study and the labour of years, we have with much pains and care gathered together the requisites and materials of a happy life, and say to ourselves, "Soul, take "thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years," the warning voice is heard, "Thou fool, this night "thy soul shall be required of thee." So transient is the date, so short the day of power, and pleasure, and greatness! But wisdom never dies; but virtue is immortal. We have a higher life than that which beats in the pulse, and when the dust returns to the dust as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it. It is indeed an awful, though a pleasing thought, that we have an eternity before us. When the sun shall be extinguished in eternal darkness; when the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll; when the earth, with all its works, shall be dissolved, the soul, shall survive the general wreck, and exult in the enjoyment of youth immortal! To think of an infinity of years of existence, enduring beyond all the numbers which we can add together, beyond all the millions of ages which figures can comprehend, and that, when all this vast sum of duration is expended, our existence is but just beginning, is, indeed, beyond imagination to grasp. Never to come to an end, never to be nearer an end, is indeed amazing, overwhelming, and incomprehensible to the mind. But such is thine inheritance, O man! "Because I live," saith the Lord, "ye shall live also." Our duration shall be coeval with His years who sits upon the Throne

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for ever; the Ancient of days, who is, and was, and is to come.

In the *last* place, to shew you the value of the soul still more, after death its state is unalterable. This is our state of probation, and now is the time to fix the character for eternity. This is the spring-time of everlasting life; according as we now sow, hereafter we shall reap; on our present conduct, depends our happiness or misery for ever. There is neither repentance nor apostacy beyond the grave. The righteous can never fall away, and to the wicked there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. From the judgment seat of the Immutable, the voice is heard, "He that is righteous, "let him be righteous still; and he that is unjust, let "him be unjust still."

But even here, too, appears that goodness of God which is over all his works. For while we know not of any addition to the torments of the wicked, the happiness of the righteous shall be for ever on the increase. That capacity of improvement which we formerly ascribed to the soul, is a capacity of improvement without end. The progress which begins here, is carried on hereafter. Heaven is indeed the residence of the spirits of just men made perfect; but it is not to be imagined, that they are all at once advanced to a perfection which they shall not to eternity exceed. They will indeed find their state happy, when they are taken from this world; they will all be presented without spot or blemish in the presence of God with exceeding joy; but still there is room left for their improvement in perfection and happiness. It cannot, indeed, be otherwise. For the more we know of the Divine perfections and works, our veneration and love of God will increase the more. Now, it is impossible that we can ever know so much of God, and his works, but that we may know more. As our knowledge of God, therefore, and our views of the Divine glory, will be enlarged without end, our love and admiration of him will also increase for ever. And in proportion to our

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love, our assimilation to the Divine nature, and our joy in the Lord, will be. What a prospect, O Christian, does this open up to thy mind! Here thou art at liberty to expatiate at large! Here is a noble field for thy contemplation! There is a time appointed when thou shalt occupy that station which is now occupied by the highest angel in heaven. Not that we shall overtake the angels in their course, or, in the career of immortality, press upon natures of a superior order; but that we shall make advances in moral perfections, and improve in the beauties of immortality. God shall behold his great family for ever brightening in holiness; for ever drawing nearer and nearer in likeness to himself. The river of their pleasures increases as it rolls. The fulness of their joy grows more and more full. Throughout all the ages of eternity, there is still a heaven which is to come; still a glory which is to be revealed.

If the soul then be of such infinite value, how inexpressibly great must the *loss* of it be! Over the mansions of utter darkness, the Scriptures draw a veil which does not authorize our conjectures. What is comprehended under these awful emblems, the worm that never dies, the fire that is not quenched, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, we do not know. May the Almighty forbid, that any of us should ever know! But of this, the Scriptures assure us, that from these mansions there is no return; that the gates of the eternal world shut to open no more, and that when the soul is once lost, it is lost for ever and for ever!

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SERMON XV.

PSALM xliii. 4.

I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.

CHRISTIANS, as we are next Lord's day to go to the altar, and approach unto God, it may be proper for me now to explain the nature, and set before you the advantages of such an approach.

The pleasures of devotion have been the theme of good men in all ages; and they are pleasures of such a kind as good men only can feel. In what I am now to say, therefore, I must appeal to the heart, to the hearts of those, who, in times past, have felt the joy of spiritual communion, and who will again feel that it is good still for them to draw nigh unto God.

This is the time when Jesus prepares a banquet for his friends; when the Spirit saith, Come; when the church saith, Come; when he that is athirst is invited to come; and happy will it be when the friends of Jesus prepare to meet with their Lord, if those who have hitherto been strangers to the holy hill, shall be attracted with the beauty which is in true holiness, also to come, and to take the waters of life freely. For thus runs the gracious promise of Heaven: "The strangers who join themselves to the "Lord, to love him and to serve him, even them will "I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joy-"ful in my house of prayer." In further treating on

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this subject, what I intend at present, is, in the *first* place, to explain the nature of that approach which the devout make to God; and, in the *second* place, set before you the advantages which accompany such an approach.

I am, in the *first* place, then, to explain the nature of that approach which the devout make to God.

This earth is not the native region of that spirit which is in man. It finds not objects here congenial with its nature, nor a sphere adequate to its faculties. It wants room to expand to its full dimensions; to spread so wide, and stretch so far, and soar so high, as its immortal nature and unbounded capacity will admit. Descended from heaven, it aspires to heaven again. Created immortal, nothing that is mortal can satisfy its desires. Made after the image of God, it tends to that God whose lineaments it still bears. When we approach to God, therefore, we find objects suited to our nature, and engage in the employment for which the soul was made. Here we are at home in our Father's house. Here our spirits aspire to hold communion with the everlasting Spirit; and we tend to heaven with exceeding joy, as to our native country.

The sense of deity is a-kin to the perception of beauty, and the sensibility of taste. We are formed by the Author of our nature to feel certain movements of mind, at the sight of certain objects. Even inanimate things are not without their attractions. The flowers of the field have their beauty. Animal life rises in our regard. Rational excellence, and moral perfection, rank still higher in our esteem; and, when expressed in action, and appearing in life, awake emotions of the noblest kind, and beget a pleasure which is supreme. Let any person of a right constituted mind, place before his view a character of high eminence for generosity, fidelity, fortitude; let him see these virtues tried to the utmost, exerted in painful struggles, overcoming difficulties, and conquering in a glorious cause, and he will feel their effects in his

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admiring mind: he will be actuated with respect and love to such illustrious virtues. We account that faculty of the mind which gives us a relish for these pleasures, a perfection in our nature, and a high one; we look upon an insensibility to such enjoyments as a radical defect. Let us apply this principle to religion. Who can behold the vastness and magnificence of the works of God without emotion; and infinite perfection without wonder and awe? Can our thoughts be fixed upon infinite goodness and everlasting love, without affection and without gratitude? Can we behold Divinity in a form of flesh; the Son of God extended on the cross for the salvation of the world, and our hearts not burn within us with love to him who loved us unto the death? Can we behold the veil drawn aside from the invisible world, the heavens opened over our head, and the treasures of eternity displayed to view, and after all continue cold and dead; cold to the beauty of the heavens, dead to the love of immortality? Where there is any sensibility at all, where there are any affections that become humanity, they will be excited to their most lively exercise by the presence of spiritual and divine things.

Under the influence of these objects, and the impression of Deity, the devout enter into their chamber and shut the door; they turn aside their eyes from beholding vanity; they charge their passions to be silent, their minds to be still; and pour out their hearts to Him who made them, in all the fervency of prayer. Thus prepared to seek the Lord God of their fathers, they come to his temple to meet with him there. They are seized with a religious awe in the presence of the sanctuary, and approach to the altar wondering and adoring, as Moses to the burning bush, and as the High Priest of old to the holy of holies. They look beyond the externals of a sacrament, and, under the symbols in the communion, they discern the mysteries of redeeming love. Notwithstanding the veil with which a greater than Moses covers himself on this holy mountain, they be-

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hold his beauty, and cannot bear the brightness of his countenance. When they sit down with him at his table, they are sensible of his presence: While their hands receive the sacred symbols, their eyes behold the Lord of Glory. In the spirit of devotion, and on the wings of faith, they rise from earth to heaven; they pierce beyond the clouds, and enter within the veil. The everlasting doors are thrown open; the King of Glory appears upon his throne; Angels and Archangels cover themselves with their wings, and all the pillars of the firmament tremble.

But not to heaven is the Divinity confined. He fills the earth; he dwells with men. Look around you, and behold the marks of his presence, and the impression of his hand. In the gay and lovely scenes of nature, behold him in his beauty smiling on his works. In the grand and awful objects of creation, in the tempest, in the thunder, in the earthquake, behold him in the Majesty of Omnipotence. When, like the prophet who retired to the wilderness, you hear that voice which rends asunder the mountains, which breaks in pieces the rocks, and which shakes the pillars of the world, you hear behind it a still small voice, saying, "It is I, be not afraid."

Thus, good men see the Creator in his works: they have the Lord always before them. They know where they can find him, and can come nigh to his seat. They go forward, and he is there, backward, and they perceive his footsteps; on the right hand his wonders are seen; on the left his goodness is felt. They cannot go but where he is. The Great Universe is the temple of the Deity, built by his hand, consecrated by his presence, bright with his glory.

The *second* thing proposed, was, to set before you the advantages which accompany this solemn approach to God, which are the following: There is honour in approaching to God, there is joy in approaching to God, there is consolation in approaching to God, there is preparation for heaven in approaching to God.

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First, then, there is honour in approaching to God. The superiority of man to the animal world has been inferred from the structure and formation of his body. While the inferior animals, prone and grovelling, bend downwards to that earth which is their only element, man is formed with an erect figure, and with a countenance that looks to the heavens. His erect figure is given as the indication of an elevated mind, and the countenance that looks to the heavens is bestowed, in order to prepare us for the contemplation of what is great and glorious. With this formation of body, and with this tendency of mind, man feels that the earth is not his native region; he looks abroad over the whole extent of nature; he has an eye that glances from earth to heaven, and a mind which, unconfined by space or time, seizes on eternity. The eye that glances from earth to heaven, the mind which seizes on eternity, draw the line between the intellectual and animal world. The beast of the field, indeed, beholds the face of the heavens: the bird of the air is cheered with the splendour of the sun; but man alone has the intellectual eye, which beholds in the heavens the handywork of Omnipotence, and which traces in the sun the glory of its Creator. To him, high-favoured of his Maker, a scene opens, unseen by the eye of sense; a new heaven and a new earth present themselves; the intellectual world discloses its rising wonders, and, seen by his own light, in the majesty of moral perfection, God appears. It was reserved to be the glory of man, that he alone, of all the inhabitants of this lower world, should be admitted into the presence of his Creator, and hold intercourse with the Author of his being.

Accordingly, in the happy days of the human race, when the age of innocence lasted, and the garden of Eden bloomed, there was an intercourse between heaven and earth, and God did dwell with man. Our first parents in Paradise were sensible of his presence; they heard his voice among the trees of the garden; they held converse with him face to face, and found

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that the chief honour of their nature consisted in drawing nigh to God. Nay, it is the happiness of higher natures, it is the glory of superior beings, of the principalities and powers in heaven, to dwell in the presence of their King, to worship at the throne of infinite perfection, and draw nearer and nearer to the fountain of all felicity. But this honour have all the saints. To thee, O Christian! it is given to hold communion with the Creator, and to become the friend of the Almighty. Truly your fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. If it be great and honourable to be near the person and round the throne of an earthly king, how truly glorious are they whom the King of heaven delighteth to honour! No wonder then, that though exalted to the highest dignity which the world can bestow, the king of Israel was ambitious of higher still; "One thing have I desired "of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell "in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to "behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his "temple."

Secondly, there is joy in approaching to God. "I "will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding "joy." The idea of a perfect being is the most joyful subject of contemplation that can be presented to man. Moral qualities, even when they shine in a lesser degree, have a charm for the soul. The prospect of natural beauty is not more pleasant to the eye, than the contemplation of moral beauty to the mind. A great and good action, a striking instance of benevolence, of public spirit, of magnanimity, interests us strongly in behalf of the performer, and makes the heart glow with gratitude to him, although he be unknown. We take delight in placing before our eyes the illustrious characters that stand forth in history, wise legislators, unshaken patriots, public benefactors of mankind, or models of goodness in private life, whose virtues shone to the past, and shine to present times, whose lives were glorious to themselves, and beneficial to the world. If an imperfect copy

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gives so much satisfaction, how will we be affected at the contemplation of the great Original? If a few faint traces and lineaments of goodness, scattered up and down, yield us so much pleasure, the pleasure will be supreme, when we contemplate His nature in whom every excellence, every moral perfection, all Divine attributes, reside as in their native seat, flow as from their eternal source, and ever operate as vital and immortal principles. For all created beauty is but a shadow of that beauty which is uncreated; all human excellence but an emanation of that excellence which is Divine; all finite perfection but a faint copy of perfections which are infinite; and all the traces of goodness to be found among men or angels, but a few faint rays from the Father of lights, the uncreated, unclouded, and unsetting sun of nature, who at first gave life to the universe, who kindled the vital flame which is still glowing, who supplies all the orbs of heaven with undiminished lustre, and whose single smile spreads joy over the moral world.

Thus, the very idea of a perfect Being is a source of high pleasure to the mind; but to us there is more implied in the idea of the Deity. For these perfections are not Dormant in the Divine Nature; they are perpetually employed for the happiness of man. This glorious Being is our Father and our Friend. He called us into being at first, to make us happy; he hath given us many proofs of his goodness, and he hath allowed us to hope for more. He is soon to give us an opportunity of commemorating the most signal display of his grace, his noblest gift to the children of men. And, if he spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up to the death for us all, may it not be depended upon, that with him, he will give us all things? Entering into these ideas, and animated with this spirit, the pious man is never so much in his element, as when he is drawing nigh to God. The mind never makes nobler exertions, is never so conscious of its native grandeur and ancient dignity, as when holding high con-

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verse with its Creator: The heart never feels such unspeakable peace, as when it is fixed upon him who made it, as when its affections go out on the supreme beauty, as when it rests upon the Rock of Ages, and is held within the circle of the everlasting arms.

Hence, the good men of old, in approaching to God, broke forth into the language of rapture, "As the "hart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my "soul after thee, O Lord. O God, thou art my God, "early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee, "My flesh longeth for thee in a dry and parched "land, wherein no water is; that I may see thy glory "as I have seen it in the sanctuary. Because thy "loving kindness is better than life, my mouth shall "praise thee with joyful lips. Surely we shall be sa-"tisfied with the goodness of thy house, and thou "wilt give us to drink of the river of thy pleasures.— "Whom have we in the heavens but thee, and what "is there upon earth we can desire beside thee? My "flesh and heart shall fail, but thou art the strength "of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Thirdly, There is consolation in approaching to God. Alas! in this world, afflictions so abound, that consolation is often our greatest good. In how few days of this mortal life do we not feel the want of a comforter? Ever since the introduction of sin into the earth, human life hath been a scene of misery. Man is born to trouble, and sore is the travail which is appointed to him under the sun. We come into the world the most forlorn of all beings; the voice of sorrow is heard from the birth; man sighs on through every path of future life, and the grave is the only place of refuge, where the weary are at rest. Sometimes, indeed, a gleam of joy intervenes, an interval of happiness takes place. Fond man indulges the favourable hour. Then we promise to ourselves the scenes of paradise; perpetual sun-shine, and days without a cloud. But the brightness only shines to disappear; the cloud comes again, and we awake to our wonted anxiety and sorrow.

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Not limited to our own personal woes, we are doomed to suffer for sorrows not our own. We are not unconcerned spectators of human life. We are interested in every event that befalls our fellow men. Sympathy makes us feel the distresses of others; and the best affections of the heart become the sources of woe. How many deaths do we suffer in mourning over the friends that we have lost! While we lament their unhappy or untimely fate, we cut short the thread of our own days. The chords of love are broken, one after another; string after string is severed from the heart, till all our early attachments are dissolved, till our sad eyes have wept over every friend laid in the dust, and till we become lonely and wretched as we at first began.

Under these afflictions, and from these sorrows, devotion opens a retreat; the altar of God presents a place of refuge; the ear of the Eternal is open to thy cry; the arm of the Almighty is stretched out to relieve thee. There is a sanctuary where no evil can approach, there is an asylum where no enemy can enter. In the pavilion of his presence, God will hide thee in the time of trouble; in the secret of his tabernacle, he will cover thee in the day of danger. There the prisoners rest in peace, and hear not the voice of the oppressor. There are the small and the great, and the servant is free from his master. There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

It is some consolation, it is some relief, to open our hearts to men, and tell our sorrows to a friend, who can give us no relief, but by mingling his tears with ours. What consolation, what relief will it then give to open our hearts, and tell our sorrows to that Friend above, who is ever gracious to hear, and ever mighty to save! To that Friend who never fails; who is afflicted in all our afflictions, and who keeps us as the apple of his eye! Art thou therefore oppressed with the calamities of life; is thy head bowed down with affliction, or thy heart broken with sorrow? Approach to the altar, go to God, present to him the prayer of

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thy heart, and he will send thee help from his holy hill.

Lastly, In approaching to God, there is preparation for heaven. The objects among which we are conversant, have a wonderful power over the mind. External things make such an impression within, that the character is often formed from the situation. The soul is assimilated to surrounding objects, and proportions itself to the sphere in which it moves. When employed in little and in low things, it is contracted; when occupied in earthly matters, it is debased; but acquires enlargement and elevation, in the presence of what is grand and sublime. By daily converse with the world, and familiarity with material things, the soul is alienated from the life of God; and man, setting his affections on things below, becomes of the earth, earthy. But when we engage in the exercises of devotion, we counterwork the charm of material objects, we retire from the world and its temptations, and shut the door of the heart against every intruding guest, that would disturb us in approaching to God. Standing upon holy ground, we put off unhallowed affections, and impure desires. From the presence of the Lord every sinful thought flies away. Our attention is turned from those things that would raise guilty passions in the mind. Pure and spiritual ideas are presented to view, and the perfections of Almighty God are set before our eyes. When these are before us, our admiration of them will increase, our love to them will be kindled, and we will endeavour to resemble them in our own life. Thus, by approaching to God, we become like God. By devotion on earth, we anticipate the work of heaven. We join ourselves, beforehand, to the society of angels and blessed spirits above; we already enter on the delightful employment of eternity, and begin the song which is heard for ever around the throne of God.

Such, Christians! are the advantages of approaching to God, and encompassing the altar. And if,

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with pious affections, and a pure heart, we draw nigh unto God, God will draw nigh unto us. To the wide extent of his creation, to the great temple of heaven and earth, JEHOVAH prefers the heart of the pure and the pious. There he takes up his abode; there he delighteth to dwell. In the divine discourse which our Lord delivered to his disciples, the same night in which he was betrayed, there is a promise rich in consolation. "If a man love me, he will keep my "words: and my Father will love him, and we will "come and make our abode with him." While this promise sounds in your ears, I hope that your hearts correspond to the strain, and that you recal those precious hours, when God manifested himself to you, so as he does not unto the world. When, on former occasions, he sent his light and his truth; when the fountain of living waters has been opened, and the voice came to your ears, "Drink and live for ever;" did you not feel emotions which came from no created source, and taste a joy which confessed its origin from heaven? Who can describe the blessedness of that time, when a present Deity is felt? It is the joy of heaven upon earth; the happiness of eternity in the moments of time.

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CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

[The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated in Scotand always upon a Sunday, in the parish church; and, in most places, once only in the year. There is no particular Sunday fixed for this solemnity. On the Thursday and Saturday before it, and on the Monday after it, there is public worship; and Sermons are preached upon subjects suitable to the occasion. The Thursday is particularly set apart for solemn *fasting*; and no labour is that day permitted in the parish. The greater part of persons of all ranks in the parish, who have arrived at the years of discretion, join in celebrating this Ordinance, which, partly from this cause, and partly from its taking place but once or twice a-year, is performed in a manner that is very solemn and devout.

The Service begins with the singing of a Psalm; which the Minister reads out immediately upon ascending the pulpit. The choice of the Psalms is, in all cases, at the Minister's discretion; and, to give the Sacramental Service more completely, some portions, which are often sung on such occasions, are inserted here, in their places. The music is entirely vocal. In a few Congregations there is music in parts; but, in general, the whole Congregation sing in unison. The Psalm tunes are set to slow time: the melody is simple, grave, and often very affecting.]

Morning Service.

Psalm lxv.

1 PRAISE waits for thee in Zion, Lord,
To thee vows paid shall be.
2 O thou that hearer art of pray'r,
All flesh shall come to thee.
3 Iniquities, I must confess,
Prevail against me do;
But as for our transgressions,
Them purge away shalt thou.
4 Blest is the man whom thou dost choose,
And mak'st approach to thee,
That he within thy courts, O Lord,
May still a dweller be:

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We surely shall be satisfy'd
With thy abundant grace,
And with the goodness of thy house,
Ev'n of thy holy place.

PRAYER.

[In the Worship of the Scottish Church, the whole Congregation rise from their seats at the beginning of the prayer, and stand in a devout posture till it be concluded.]

"LORD GOD ALMIGHTY! Which was, which is, and which art to come! Thou art the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. All perfections adorn thy nature; every attribute of Majesty supports thy Throne. The heavens are thine; thou hast made them bright with thy glory: The earth also is thine; thou art the Lord of universal nature. Thou dwellest in that uncreated light, which mortal eye hath not seen, nor can see. Thousands of angels and of blessed spirits stand before thee: Ten thousand times ten thousand minister in thy presence, and perform thy pleasure. The whole host of heaven worshippeth thee.

"Thou hast formed the mountains, and created the wind. With thee are the treasures of the snow, and the chambers of the hail. Thou makest thy pavilion in the dark cloud: Thou sittest on the multitude of waters; Thou walkest on the wings of the wind; and thy voice in the storm makes the nations adore. The sons of men, generation after generation, return to the dust from whence they were taken. The heavens which we behold shall vanish like the cloud which covers them; the earth which we inhabit, shall dissolve like the snows upon its surface; but independent of change, of the revolutions of time, and of the fate of worlds, thou continuest the same, immortal, unalterable, the Ancient of days, from everlasting to everlasting God.

"Thou hast given commission unto all thy works, to declare their Maker. The light of heaven reveals

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to our eyes thine existence: Our ears hear the voice of universal nature proclaiming the Providence which sustains what it made. Thou walkest in the circle of the universe. Thy footsteps are everywhere seen; Thyself, the invisible God. How powerful is that arm which supports the pillars of the firmament, and keeps the wheels of nature in perpetual motion! How unsearchable that wisdom, which, from the first of time, has conducted all nature? How boundless that goodness which supplieth the wants of the whole creation! How precious are thy thoughts of grace to the children of men?

"Thine is the power and the victory, and the majesty. Whatsoever pleaseth thee, that thou dost in the heavens, and in the earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places. Thou weighest the mountains in scales; thou takest up the isles as the dust of the balance; the nations are as the drop of the bucket before thee. At thine altar, Labanon is not sufficient to burn; nor the cattle upon a thousand hills, to be a burnt-offering.

"Thou inhabitest time and eternity, and the praises of Israel. Thy goings forth hath been of old; thy love to the human race before the birth of time. Before the mountains were brought forth, when no deep arose from beneath, and no fountains abounded with water, even then were we present to thy mind. Thou didst rejoice in the earth that was to be inhabited, and thy delights were with the children of men. We thank thee for the rank thou hast assigned us in thy creation. Thou hast given us a portion of thine own light; thou hast opened to us the source of intellectual joy, and hast made us capable of becoming fit for heaven, and like unto thee. Above all, we rejoice in Jesus Christ, who redeemed us from death, and washed away our sins in his own blood.

"As we come now before thee to commemorate the sacrifice of the Lamb which was slain from the foundation of the world, we recal with joy what ancient days beheld, and the wonders thou didst work

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of old. To the fathers thy presence appeared, and to the prophets, thine inspiration was given. On mount Sinai thou didst descend to give the law; by types and figures thou didst shadow forth good things which were to come. In these last days thou hast spoken unto us by thy Son. Thou hast performed thy holy covenant, and raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of thy servant David. Our souls do magnify the Lord; our spirits now rejoice in God our Saviour.

"But whilst we adore thy goodness and mercy, we lament our own unworthiness and guilt. We are less than the least of all thy mercies. We are transgressors from the birth. We are unworthy to lift up our eyes to the place where thine honour dwelleth. Thou whose pure eye discerns darkness in the sun, and charges thine angels with folly, thou beholdest the multitude of our iniquities. We have sinned, and what shall we answer unto thee, O thou who triest the heart! We have neglected the good which it was in our power to perform, and done the evil from which we should have abstained. Deaf to the voice of wisdom we have turned aside unto folly; forgetting heaven and immortality, we have set our affections upon the earth; we have looked up to the fashion of the world, rather than to thy laws. Alas! when we consider what we might have been; when we think upon the talents that we have abused, the means of improvement that we have neglected, the opportunities of doing good that we have lost; when we reflect how long it was before we began to form a serious thought; we tremble at the foot-stool of thy justice.

"We confess our sins to thee, O Lord! Our iniquities are now before us. Thou who knowest the heart; thou who knowest the sorrow of our souls. Trampling upon conscience, undervaluing the joys of heaven, and braving the pains of hell, we have surrendered ourselves to delusions, which, under the colour of good, have left us to misery and remorse.

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We have turned our glory into shame; we have defaced thine image, and the lineaments of heaven. Woe unto us: for we have sinned. Every way have we sinned; ungrateful for mercies bestowed; insensible of blessings promised; impatient under the smallest evils; provoking the friend who loves us! Our condemnation is aggravated, when we think against whom we have sinned! Hadst thou been a hard master, less had been our crime, and less had been our sorrow; but we have offended against the most indulgent goodness, against the tenderest mercy, against the fondest love.

"O Thou who madest us, have mercy upon us! O Thou who redeemest us, lift up again the light of thy countenance! God of infinite perfection, we humble ourselves before thee in the dust! Suppliant at thy throne, we plead for mercy! In the meritorious life, in the atoning death, in the prevalent intercession, of our great High Priest, we place our claims for life, and our hopes of salvation. Hide not thy face, O God! Shut not thine ears against the prayer of the miserable. Shine forth in our redemption, and let thy glory appear in saving thy people from their sins.

"By thy goodness which created the world, by thy tender mercies which are over all thy works, by the love which moved thee to redeem mankind by the death of thine own Son,—save us, we beseech thee; save us, O God, from our sins! Have mercy upon us, O Lord! O Lord! have mercy upon us!

"See, O Father! the tears of thy children. Weary and heavy laden with sin, we come unto thee, O blessed Jesus! that we may find rest unto our souls. At thy feet, great Patron and Protector of the human race, we lay ourselves, and pray for mercy and salvation. We come again unto thy altar, to seal our vows of new obedience.

"Why are our hearts cast down, and our spirits disquieted within us? Thou art mighty to save; we still hope in thee; our fathers trusted in thee, and

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they were not deceived. Whom have we in heaven but thee? When thou standest at the door and knockest, may it be the voice of our hearts, Come in thou beloved! to sit with us and to bless us! Clothe us with the garments of salvation: let thy banner over us be love.

"Father of all! God of our Israel, bend now the heavens, and come down this day to thy holy mountain. O send forth thy light and thy truth. Lead us by the green pastures. May the dews descend, and the blessings be poured down. Here take up the place of thy rest; here command the blessing, life for evermore. Uphold our goings in the paths of righteousness, and perfect within us thy good work unto eternal life.

"And now, what wait we for, O our Father in heaven! Manifest now thyself unto us we most fervently beseech thee. May we see thee as thou hast been seen heretofore in thy holy place. Go up with us, O our God, this day unto thy holy mountain; and make us joyful in thy house of prayer.

"Now, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, be praise for ever and for ever! *Amen.*"

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MORNING, OR ACTION SERMON.

LUKE xxii. 44.

And being in agony.—

THE agony of our Lord in the garden, and his complaints upon the cross, are most extraordinary parts of his life. A dread of those sufferings which he was to undergo, appears to have made a strong impression upon his mind. Forebodings of them frequently disturbed his repose, and overwhelmed his spirits. Many days before his passion he cried out, "Now am I troubled, and what shall I say? Fa-"ther, save me from this hour." It was probably with a view to console his mind in such a dejected state, that he was transfigured; that he re-assumed the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and was favoured with the presence of Moses and Elias from the mansions of immortality; for, as we are informed by the Evangelist, they talked of that decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Magnanimity in all its exertions was a conspicuous part of his character. He who walked upon the water, who slept in tranquillity amid the storm, and who encountered the foe of mankind in the desert, cannot be accused of a defect in courage. When a band of soldiers, with Judas at their head, came to apprehend him and inquired for Jesus of Nazareth, he said unto them, "I am he;" and by the dignity of his demeanour, struck them with awe. When he was accused by the chief priests and elders before the judgment-seat of Pilate, with that Majestic silence which is sometimes the best expression of

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fortitude, he answered not a word. Nay, when he underwent the severest of his bodily sufferings upon the cross, he endured them with a tranquillity, a firmness and magnanimity, which display a mind truly great and undaunted. How, therefore, on some other occasions, his spirit was overwhelmed, is a subject worthy of our inquiry at all times. More particularly on this day, when we have assembled together to renew the memorial of his death upon the cross, and to recal the remembrance of all his sufferings.

In further discoursing upon this subject, I shall, in the *first* place, set before you the account which is given of his sufferings; and, *secondly*, endeavour to assign the causes of them.

In the *first* place, I am to set before you the account which is given of his sufferings.

That night in which he was betrayed, the Saviour of the world went into the garden of Gethsemane, and ascended the mountain of Olives, as he was wont to do. This had been his accustomed retreat from the world; here was the hallowed ground to which he retired for prayer and contemplation; here he had often spent the night in intercourse with heaven. He was accompanied by Peter, James, and John, the very same disciples who had been the witnesses of his glorious transfiguration, when Moses and Elias had appeared to him, and a voice had come from the overshadowing cloud, "This is my beloved Son, in whom "I am well pleased." What a different scene now presented itself! the rays of glory shone no more; the Divine presence was withdrawn; the voice from heaven ceased; that time was now come, which is so emphatically called *the hour and power of darkness*.

He had lately partaken of the passover with his disciples; that passover which with so much earnestness, he had desired to eat; he had instituted the holy sacrament of the supper; he had delivered those divine discourses recorded in the Gospel of John; he had warned them against deserting him in the hour of temptation; he had selected three of them to attend

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him in his sorrows: nevertheless, even these three thus favoured, thus honoured, thus warned, forgat all that had been said and done, and unconcerned sunk into sleep. He was left alone to endure the bitterness of that hour.

The severity of his sufferings in the garden, the anguish and the horror which then overwhelmed him, appear from the strong colours in which they are drawn by the sacred writers. They speak of his sorrow, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto "death." They speak of his agony, that is, the most inexpressible torment of mind: "And being in an a-"gony." They speak of his fears: "He was heard "in that he feared." They speak of his cries, and his tears: "He offered up prayers and supplications with "strong crying and tears." They speak of the prodigious effects his agony had upon his body: "His "sweat was as it were great drops of blood." They speak of the desire he had to withdraw from his sufferings for a time: "Father, if it be possible, let this "cup pass from me."

They who are acquainted with the style of the Holy Evangelists, know how remarkable they are for simplicity of narrative. They make use of no oratorial arts to interest the passions of their readers, they affect no threatenings or embellishments of eloquence, but place the plain action before our view, devoid of all ornament whatever. Historians contemporary to the events which they record, and who beheld the actions which they describe, usually give free vent to their passions in relating the occurrences of their history, and enter with the zeal of parties upon the various subjects which engage their attention. The sacred writers, on the other hand, lay aside every thing that looks like passion or party zeal; they relate events, not like men who were interested in the facts which they describe; not like men who had acted a part in the history they write, not even with the ordinary emotion of spectators, but with all the simplicity, and conciseness, and brevity, of an

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evidence in a court of justice. The torments which our Saviour endured in the garden therefore must have been great and amazing, when the sacred writers clothe them with all the circumstances of terror, and paint them in all the colours of distress. What shall we say, then, to account for this dejection which our Lord felt, and for this desire which he expressed to be saved from his sufferings? In the ordinary course of human affairs, an innocent man of common fortitude, resigns himself with acquiescence to his fate; his integrity supports him; a good cause and a good conscience carry him onwards through life and death, undaunted and undismayed. Hence, many illustrious and virtuous men in the heathen world, supported by the native fortitude of the human mind, poured contempt upon all the forms of death, and departed with magnanimity, and with glory. If a man who had only innocence to support him, might thus acquiesce in his doom, one whose sufferings were to be publicly useful; whose death was to be glorious to himself, and beneficial to the world, might rejoice in the midst of his sufferings, and exult in the prospect of death. In the early times of the Christian Church, the first disciples followed their Lord in a path that was marked with blood; persons of all ranks, of all ages, and of both sexes, braved the rage of the enemy, the sword of the persecutor, the fire of the tormentor, became candidates for the crown of martyrdom, and with triumph embraced that very form of death at which our Lord, to appearance, now trembled and stood aghast.

This leads us to the *second* thing proposed, which was to account for these appearances; to assign the causes of our Lord's peculiar sufferings. In general, then, there was circumstances in the passion of our Lord, of a singular kind, fully adequate to produce the effects here mentioned. What these were, will appear when we consider, that our Lord died in a state where he was abandoned by his friends, and by mankind; that he died in a state of ignominy; and

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that he died in a state, where, after suffering an agony of spirit, he was at last forsaken by his Father in heaven. While the two former of these can hardly be paralleled in all their circumstances, the last is entirely peculiar to our Lord, and constitutes the chief branch of his sufferings.

First, He died in a state where he was abandoned by his friends and by mankind. From the beginning he found the world against him. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. He was to be made perfect through sufferings, and many were the distresses which wrung his heart, before the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem. This was the severest of all, from the manifold terrors that were now combined together. He had not only to carry his own cross, to have his head crowned with thorns, to be derided and buffeted, to be extended upon the accursed tree, to suffer the scourge, the nails, and the spear. All this he was superior to; but to be abandoned by his friends, and by all mankind, at the very time he was suffering for their sakes, was the peculiar and forlorn fate of the Saviour of the world.

The presence of our friends, in the hour of trial, gives a secret strength to the mind; it is a melancholy pleasure to die among those with whom we lived. But this consolation our Saviour had not. He had chosen twelve friends to be the partners of his life, and the companions of his death. One of these betrayed him, another denied him; all forsook him and fled.

It is some relief to the unhappy sufferer, to have the passions of the spectators on his side; from their sympathy he derives courage, and the pain that is felt by many, is alleviated to the one who suffers. But the high and the low, the Jew and the Heathen, entered into the conspiracy against Christ. The priests and elders accused him. The High Priest cried out, "He is guilty of death." Pilate, his judge, though conscious of his innocence, though he washed his hands from the guilt of his death, or-

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dered him to be scourged, and allowed him to be crucified. The people, with a frantic ardour sought his death. That very people, who, a few days before, upon his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, had strewed the way with palm branches, and cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David," that very people, such is the giddiness of the multitude, now cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him." Thus, in his sorrows he stood by himself, a wretched individual without a friend. When the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered abroad. He trode the wine-press alone. Of the people there were none with him. When he died for all, he was pitied by none.

In the *second* place, he died in a state of ignominy. The death of the cross was not only painful and tormenting, but ignominious also, and accursed. A death that was never inflicted upon free men, but reserved for slaves and malefactors, for the basest and the vilest of the human kind. There is implanted in the mind of man a strong abhorrence of shame and disgrace. The sense of ignominy is more pungent in a noble nature, than the feeling of pain. To want the appearance of innocence, while, at the same time, we preserve the reality; to lie under the imputation of heinous crimes, to die the death of a criminal, and leave the world with an indelible stain upon our name and memory, is one of the sorest trials that virtue can meet with upon earth. Yet even this our Lord had to suffer. He had to endure the cross, and submit to the shame. It was foretold by the prophet, that he should be "numbered among transgressors." And although he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, yet he was impeached of the highest crimes: Not only as a violater of the Divine law, in breaking the Sabbath, and frequenting the company of sinners, but also as an impostor, deluding the people; as a blasphemer, assuming to himself the prerogatives of God; and as a seditious person perverting the nation, usurping royal authority, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar. "If he had

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"not been a malefactor," said the Jews to Pilate, "we should not have delivered him up to thee." The resentment of such a situation our Lord felt strongly, and discovered in that remarkable speech, "Are ye come against me as against a thief, with "swords and with staves?" Thus, our Lord was not only a sufferer, but in appearance a criminal: he had not only to endure the pain, but the ignominy of the cross; not only to be wounded and tormented, but also to be mocked, reviled, and scorned by the vilest of mankind. Then were fulfilled the words of the mystical Prophet, "I am a reproach of men, and "despised of the people. All they that see me, "laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they "shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord "that he would deliver him: Let him deliver him, "seeing he delighted in him." There is not a circumstance in the history of mankind so ignominious, and to an ingenuous nature so tormenting, as the following, which is recorded by the Evangelists. Pilate said, "Shall I release Jesus? They all cried, Not "this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a "robber."

There is a misapprehension into which we are apt to fall, in considering the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Whenever he appears before our eyes, the splendour of his Divinity overcomes the mind, and in the Lord of glory the man of sorrows is forgotten. But, my friends, you are to remember that as God is by his nature incapable of pain or sorrow, in all scenes of distress, the *Divinity* withdrew, that the *Humanity* might suffer. Yes, Christians, the man Christ Jesus was like one of ourselves, as encompassed with the same infirmities, and subjected to the same distresses as accessible to sorrow, and as sensible of ignominy and pain.

Thirdly, Our Lord died in a state, where, after undergoing in agony of spirit, he was at last forsaken by his Father in heaven. The presence of God, and the aids of his Holy Spirit, have always been the con-

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solation of good men in their afflictions. They experienced the fulfilment of these promises. "As thy "days are, so shall thy strength be. When thou "goest through the waters I will go with thee, and "through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. "Our fathers trusted in thee," saith the Psalmist, "they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." But in the sufferings endured by the Redeemer in the garden, and on the cross, God departed from him, and the Divine presence was withdrawn.

Christians! what an hour was that, which our Saviour passed in the garden of Gethsemane! In the time of his passion, his torments succeeded one another. He was not at the same time betrayed, mocked, scourged, crowned with thorns, pierced with a spear, extended on a cross, and forsaken by his Father; but here all these torments rose before him at once: all his pains were united together; what he was to endure in succession now crowded into one moment, and his soul was overcome. At this time, too, the powers of darkness, it should seem, were permitted to work upon his imagination, to disturb his Spirit, and make the vale through which he was to pass, appear more dark and gloomy.

Add to this, that our Saviour having now come to the close of his public life, his whole mediatorial undertaking presented itself to his view; his eye ran over the history of that race which he came to save from the beginning to the end of time; he had a feeling of all the misery, and a sense of all the guilt of men. If he looked back into past times, what did he behold? The earth a field of blood, a vale of tears, a theatre of crimes. If he cast his eyes upon that one in which he lived, what did he behold? That nation to whom he was sent, rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, imprecating his blood to be upon them and their children, and bringing upon themselves such a desolation as has not happened to any other people. When he looked forward to suc-

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ceeding ages, what did he behold? He saw that the wickedness of men was to continue and abound, to erect a Golgotha in every age, and by obstinate impenitence to crucify afresh the Son of God. He saw that in his blessed name, and under the banners of his cross, the most atrocious crimes were to be committed, the sword of persecution to be drawn, the best blood of the earth to be shed, and the noblest spirits that ever graced the world to be cut off; he saw that for many of the human race all the efforts of saving mercy were to be defeated; that his death was to be of no avail; that his blood was to be shed in vain; that his agonies were to be lost, and that it had been happy for them, if he had never been born. He saw that he was to be wounded in the house of his friends; that his name was to be blasphemed among his own followers; that he was to be dishonoured by the wicked lives of those who called themselves his disciples; that one man was to prefer the gains of iniquity, another the blandishments of pleasure, a third the indulgence of malicious desire, and all of you, at times, the gratification of your favourite passion, to the tender mercies of the God of peace, and the dying love of a crucified Redeemer. While the hour revolved that spread forth all these things before his eyes, we need not wonder that he began to be in agony, and that he sweated as it were great drops of blood.

On the cross that agony returned, and was redoubled. Judge of what he felt by the expressions of the Prophet in the mystical psalm, "My God, my God, "why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far "from helping me, and from the words of my roar- "ing? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou "hearest not, and in the night-season I am not silent. "Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou "didst deliver them. But I am a worm, and no man; "a reproach of men, and despised of the people. I "am poured out like water. My heart is melted

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" like wax in the midst of my bowels; thou hast " brought me to the dust of death."

This constituted what the ancient church called the *unknown sufferings* of Christ. In the cup which the Father gave him to drink, there was something sharper than the vinegar, and more bitter than the gall: The darkness which at that time covered the face of the earth, was but a faint emblem of that blacker cloud which overwhelmed his soul. What the degree of these unknown sufferings was, how they were inflicted, or how they were sustained, we cannot tell. But the complaint of dereliction which the Saviour then uttered, the sense which all nature had of its Creator rising in wrath, when the earth trembled, the rocks were rent asunder, and the grave gave up its dead, testify that they were such as God only could inflict, and the Son of God only could sustain.

Never was there sorrow like unto this sorrow, wherewith the Lord now chastened him in the day of the fierceness of his anger. Upon his agony in the garden, an angel from heaven strengthened him. But in this hour, when he bore the sins of his people, when the pangs of death took hold of him, when the sorrows of hell encompassed him; in this hour of unutterable woe, where were the heavenly messengers, and where was the countenance of his Father, which used to comfort him, and to smile upon him? Alas! from his Father proceeded those very sufferings, the severest of all which he was now experiencing. From him came the cup of trembling, which he was now doomed to drink, and the vials of vengeance which were now poured upon his head. Abandoned and smitten, and overwhelmed, he cried out, My God, " my God! why hast *thou* forsaken me?"

The measure of his woe was now full: The sufferings of Christ were completed. Before he bowed the head and yielded up the ghost, he looked up to the heavens, and saw the darkness disappearing from before the throne of God. Filled with celestial satisfac-

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tion, "Father," said he, "into thy hands I now "commit my spirit." There was but one pang more. The last cloud was vanishing from the sky, and all was to be serene for ever.

From such a subject, Christians, what sentiments arise in your breasts, and what reflections ought we to conclude with? How is the condition of our Redeemer now changed! From a scene of terror and distress, he is exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. As the sun broke out from the eclipse which it then suffered, so did the light of his Father's countenance upon his soul. Shame, and sorrow, and suffering, were succeeded by glory, and victory, and triumph.

What consolation does not this yield to Christians in all their afflictions! The High Priest under the law was taken from among men, that he might have compassion on the ignorant, and on those who were out of the way; for that he himself was also compassed with infirmity. So likewise "we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our "infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we "are, but without sin. It behoved him to be made "like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful "and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to "God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the peo-"ple: for in that he himself hath suffered, being "tempted, he is able to succour them that are "tempted."

I shall conclude with another reflection. Persons of humane and compassionate feelings, when they hear an account of their Saviour's sufferings, are apt to be moved with pity for his distresses, and to be actuated with indignation against his enemies. But these passions, in the present case, my brethren, are misapplied. "Weep not for me, ye daughters of Je-"rusalem," said our Lord, when in the midst of his sufferings. These sufferings were not intended to excite the sighs of sensibility, and the tears of distress. Sympathy is not the proper return for his love. His

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sufferings are the objects of your faith, and ought to awaken your gratitude. Neither vent your wrath against the enemies and the crucifiers of your Saviour. Look inwards, O man! search thine own bosom; there dwell the murderers of thy Lord. Thy sins, thy crimes, thine unhallowed desires, and unmortified passions, were the actors in that dreadful scene. The Jews and Romans were but instruments in *their* hands: but the feeble executioners of that wrath which *they* provoked and drew down. On these, therefore, exhaust thy vengeance. Bring forth those enemies of thy Saviour, and slay them before his eyes.

How will it affect the mind with contrition and godly sorrow, when, on this solemn occasion, you call up your past sins to your remembrance! How will it grieve you to think, as one by one they pass before you in review, that each of them added a pang to your Saviour's agony, and formed the bitter ingredients of that cup which he drank! Will not this consideration break your covenant with death, and disannul your agreement with hell? Can you ever again cherish those sins in your heart, which not only crucified the Lord of Glory upon Mount Calvary, but which even now crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame?

But, Christians, I hope better things of you. On this occasion, let me beseech you, by the sufferings of your crucified Redeemer, to break off your iniquities by repentance. Resolve sincerely, by the grace of God, to live no longer in sin. Finally, implore the assistance of the Divine Spirit, to renew your wills, and purify your souls. Then may ye rejoice in this the day of your solemnity, and be welcome guests at the table of the Lord. Then shall ye be joyfully invited to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Then shall Jesus manifest himself to you in the breaking of bread. He shall say unto your souls, "Be of good cheer, thy "sins are forgiven thee;" and inspire into you the well-grounded hope of sitting down with him at his table above, where in his presence ye shall rejoice for

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evermore. Which may God grant, and to his name be the praise! Let us pray.

PRAYER.

"SON of the Most High! Thou art worthy to take the book of life, and to open the seals thereof; for by thine agony in the garden, and by thy sufferings and death upon the cross, thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood. Thou didst tread the wine press alone; thou stainedst thy garments in blood; thou pouredst out thy soul unto death. But thine agony is now over. Thou hast seen the travail of thy soul, and tasted the joy that was set before thee! Come now from thy holy hill, glorious in thine apparel, travelling in the greatness of thy strength, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save!

"Thou art now ascended on high, and exalted to the right hand of the Father! All greatness is below thee! The principalities of heaven worship thee: the powers of darkness tremble at thy nod: the heavens and the earth are subject to thy dominion; thou hast the keys of hell and of death: thou hast all power over the visible and invisible worlds!

"In obedience to thy commands, we now come to shew forth thy death. Bless us we beseech thee, and manifest thyself to us in the breaking of bread! Lord remember us when thou art now come to thy kingdom; and accept of the solemn dedication which we are here this day to make of ourselves unto thee!

"Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy "name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on "earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our "daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we for-"give our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, "but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, "and the power, and the glory, for ever." Amen.

PSALM xviii.

4 FLOODS of ill men affrighted me,
Death's pangs about me went;
5 Hell's sorrows me environed;
Death's snares did me prevent.

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6 In my distress I call'd on God,
Cry'd to my God did I;
He from his temple heard my voice,
To his ears came my cry.
7 Th' earth, as affrighted then did shake,
Trembling upon it seiz'd;
The hills' foundations moved were,
Because he was displeas'd.

FENCING OF THE TABLES.

[What is termed the *Fencing of the Tables*, is a Discourse designed to point out the characters of such as are worthy, and such as are unworthy, to sit at them.

Among the Author's manuscripts, no form for this purpose could be found. The following is supplied by one of his friends, that no part of the Sacramental Service might be wanting.]

"CHRISTIANS, we proceed now to the particular and solemn service of this day. An ordinance, the most sacred and holy in the Christian religion, is now, by the blessing of God, to be celebrated among us. The Table of the last Supper of the Lord is before you; and there will soon be placed upon it the consecrated representations of the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, and the Saviour of the world. Let now, therefore, the believer in Christ, and the keeper of his commandments, prepare himself to approach and sit down, partake of the spiritual feast, and present his vows to the Most High.

"My brethren! So sacred an occasion as this is, demand, upon our part, a suitable frame of spirit, and naturally tends to inspire us with religious awe. Many serious and solemn thoughts now arise in the mind. An holy fear takes possession of the soul; and we distrust ourselves, when about to approach unto the presence of the living God. "Who is the "man that shall ascend into the holy hill? and where "is he who has clean hands and a pure heart?" These questions arise in the breasts even of the faithful, and of the devout. They know that God is

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of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and therefore they desire to sanctify their hearts before Him, and to prepare themselves to enter within the FENCE that is now to be drawn round his holy place.

"Before, therefore, we advance, let us inquire,—What is it that God hath required of us? How read the Commandments and the Law;"

In the Book of Exodus xx. 3, &c. we find these words;—

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land, which, the Lord thy God giveth thee.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

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" Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou " shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-" servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his " ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

'Such is the law; and we read, that when it was delivered, there was thunder on Sinai, and the people in fear, " removed and stood afar off." Let him who is guilty of wilfully and habitually breaking the law, forbear to approach unto this table: *Stand back thou profane!* But let him who obeys, and who loves the law, come forward: *Sit down thou blessed of the Lord!*

'Let us next proceed from the Old to the New Testament, from the laws of Moses to the laws of Christ. These are not reduced into a summary; but their substance is, faith, charity, humility, and holiness. We have the character of the blessed in Jesus described particularly by himself in the sermon on the mount,' Matth. v. 3, &c.

" Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the " kingdom of heaven.

" Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be " comforted.

" Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the " earth.

" Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after " righteousness: for they shall be filled.

" Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain " mercy.

" Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see " God.

" Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be " called the children of God.

" Blessed are they which are persecuted for right-" eousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

" Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and " persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against " you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceed-" ing glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so " persecuted they the prophets which were before " you."

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'Such is the character of the disciples of Christ; of those who are worthy to sit down at the Sacrament of the Supper. Let him whose character is opposite, forbear to approach unto this table: *Stand back thou profane!* But let him who imitates and who loves this character, come forward: *Sit down thou blessed of the Lord!*

'Some, my brethren, are thus debarred; but the invitation to this feast is large and generous. All who repent and propose a reformation of life are welcome. Every one that thirsteth is invited to drink. They who labour and are heavy laden, are desired to come in, and obtain rest; and he that cometh unto me, saith the Master of the feast, I will in nowise cast out.

'Trusting in the grace of Heaven, let us therefore advance; and in vows of obedience, in songs of love and of praise, partake of the banquet which is prepared. And may He himself be with us, and go before us. May He clothe us this day with the wedding-garment, and his banner over us be love!'

Psalm xxiv.

[Upon the giving out of a Psalm, such as this, the Minister desires the Elders to bring forward the *Sacramental Elements*, and the Communicants to take their seats at the Communion Table. The Elders consist of several of the most respectable and exemplary persons of the Parish, and who are regularly ordained to their office, which has a considerable resemblance to that of *Church-Warden* in England. The senior Elder generally carries the *Bread*, and the rest follow him with the *Wine*, Cups, and other Utensils, which, for the most part, are of silver. These are placed at the head of the Communion-Table, which corresponds to the *Altar* in the Church of England. The whole Communion-Table is covered with linen. The Communicants, agreeably to directions given them on a previous day, approach to the Tables, and, after communicating, retiring from them in such a manner as to avoid any interference or confusion.]

7 YE gates lift up your heads on high,
Ye doors that last for ay,
Be lifted up, that so the King
Of glory enter may.

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8 But who of glory is the King?
The mighty Lord is this,
E'en that same Lord, that great in might
And strong in battle is.
9 Ye gates, lift up your heads, ye doors,
Doors that do last for ay,
Be lifted up that so the King
Of glory enter may.
10 But who is he that is the King
Of glory? who is this?
The Lord of hosts, and none but he,
The King of glory is.

Consecration Prayer.

[This Prayer is pronounced by the Minister standing at the head of the Communion-Table, to which he has now descended from the Pulpit. And the Addresses to the Communicants, are all afterwards delivered successively at this place.]

"ETERNAL JEHOVAH! Lord of the heavens and of the earth, God of glory, we bend before thy throne. Thy children prostrate themselves with holy adoration at thy footstool. The heavens are bright with thy glory. The earth is full of thy praise. The great universe is thy temple. Thy name is JEHOVAH, who alone hast, of thyself, being and immortality.

"Thou mightest have continued for ever alone, in the enjoyment of thine own perfections, though angels and men had never been. But to extend life, to communicate happiness, and to diffuse joy, thou didst rise from thy throne, thou raisedst thine arm over the void, thou spakest this earth into existence, thou madest us after thine own image, and hast watched over us from the beginning of time, even until this day.

"When we transgressed against thy commandments, and lost our original innocence, thy mercy forsook us not. Thou hadst compassion upon the offspring of Adam. Thine eye looked with pity, thou didst lay our help upon One who was mighty to save. Him, in the fulness of time, the Ambassa-

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dor of peace and reconciliation, and love, thou didst send. Our ears have heard the joyful sound; our eyes have seen the salvation of our God. This is a day of the Son of Man!

"Glory be to God, that peace is proclaimed on earth, and good-will to the children of men! Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be he who came in the name of the Highest to save us! Halleluiah, Halleluiah, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!

"God of the patriarchs! who saw afar off this day which we now commemorate: God of the prophets! who foretold its arrival: God of the righteous men! who desired its approach: God of the evangelists and apostles! who first beheld the day of the Messiah: God of the martyrs and confessors! who honoured it with their blood: God of our fathers, who within these walls have kept it in remembrance: God of our children! who will commemorate it when we shall sleep in the dust: God of time! God of eternity! descend now, make thyself known to us, and fill this house with thy glory.

"Father Almighty! Creator of the world, great Parent and Preserver of men, who didst contrive the mystery of our redemption, which we now come to commemorate: Son of the Most High! Redeemer of the world, Intercessor, Friend, and Patron of the human race, who by thy death upon the cross, didst accomplish the mystery of our redemption, which we now come to commemorate: Eternal Spirit! proceeding from the Father and the Son, Author of the divine life, Comforter of the faithful, Inhabitant of the temple of a pure heart, who dost apply to the penitent the benefits of that redemption which we now come to commemorate,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! God blessed for ever; be now present; be now propitious, and hear the prayers of thy people.

"Thou hast brought us to thy holy mountain; make us joyful in thy house of prayer. We have come to thy temple; may we behold thy glory; may

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the beauty of our God be upon us, and make all thy goodness to pass before us. Open unto us the fountain of life, that we may drink and live. Now command the blessing, even life for evermore.

"May these elements of bread and wine, which in the name, and by the authority, of the Lord Jesus Christ, we now set apart to represent his body and blood, convey to the faithful the grace of the new covenant. May the bread become the bread of life; may the fruit of the vine be a foretaste of that wine which is for ever new in the kingdom of the Father. Eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup, may we never after hunger or thirst again. Hear, O God, these our humble praises and prayers. May they now ascend before thee with acceptance from this table, upon which are the emblems of the Lamb sacrificed, to the throne of the Lamb reigning in glory. Now, to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be all glory, and honour, dominion, and power, time without end. Amen."

Address to Communicants before and after the Service of the Tables.

[*Service of Tables*, is the homely phrase which has been long used, and is still retained upon this occasion. It strictly refers to the distribution of the Elements by the Elders. It has been improperly extended to the Addresses made by the Minister; for the Minister, in reality, only gives the Elements to the two communicants who sit nearest on each hand. The Elders administer them to the rest.

At the first Table, the Minister immediately upon concluding the Consecration Prayer, usually proceeds to read the words of the Institution, and without adding more, to distribute the Elements. But before the Service of the succeeding Tables, Addresses at some length are made to the Communicants.]

Table First.

[Before the Service.]

"Communicants! I now proceed, after the example, and in the words of our Lord to distribute among you the symbols of his body bro-

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ken, and of his blood shed. The sacred warrant was received of the Lord, and has been delivered unto us.

[Service.]

"The Lord Jesus, that night on which he was be-
"trayed, took bread, and having given thanks," (as we have already done in his name), "he brake it,
"and gave it unto his disciples, saying, Take, eat;
"*(Here the Minister gives the Bread)*, this is my bo-
"dy which is broken for you: this do in remembrance
"of me."

[After a short Pause.]

"In like manner also after supper, he took the cup,
"and gave it unto his disciples," *(Here the Minister gives the Cup)*, "saying, this cup is the New Testa-
"ment in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins
"of many; drink ye all of it. For as often as ye eat
"of this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do shew the
"Lord's death until he come again."

[After the Service.]

"Draw near, my soul, and behold this great sight! Thy Saviour, the Son of God, and equal to God, in agony upon the cross!

"Communicants! that agony was for you. It was to save you from the wrath to come. It was to restore you to the favour and image of God; and to present you one day before Heaven, a glorious Church, perfect in the beauty of holiness.

"Forbid it, O Communicants, that you should ever be of that number who crucify the Lord afresh, and by your ungodly lives dishonour that name by the which you are called. The religion of Jesus may be attacked by its enemies, but it can only be hurt by its friends. Much, therefore, O Christians, depends upon you. The sincerity of your faith, the truth of your religion, and the honour of your Master, are at stake. Shew to the world the Divinity of

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the Gospel, by leading lives becoming its glorious light; and never forget the vows which you have this day made.

"To animate you to run the race of glory, lift up your eyes, O Communicants, from these symbols of the Lamb sacrificed, to the throne of the Lamb reigning in glory. There the harps of heaven are all employed, and the song of Moses and the Lamb is heard from ten thousand voices. The blessed above, with one accord, cast down their crowns at the foot of the throne, and cry out, Hosanna, and blessing, and praise! Many who, like ourselves, were frail and imperfect creatures, who, like us, struggled under the bondage of corruption, have now entered within the gates of the heavenly Zion, and have sat with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the new Jerusalem.

"O city of the living God! When shall we approach to thee. When shall the day come, when death shall be swallowed up in victory! when this corrupted shall put on incorruption; when this mortal shall put on immortality! This is our song in the house of our pilgrimage. Because of this our glory rejoices, and our flesh shall rest in hope.

"As ye have received the Lord Jesus, communi-
"cants, so walk ye in him. Go in peace; and may
"the God of all peace and grace go with you. Amen."

[The Minister now generally quits the head of the Table; and after communicating at the Second Service, resumes his place in the Pulpit. One or more neighbouring Ministers, who act the part of his Assistants, preside, in succession, at the remaining Tables.]

PSALM ciii.

1 O THOU, my soul, bless God the Lord,
And all that in me is
Be stirred up, his holy name
To magnify and bless.

2 Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God,
And not forgetful be,
Of all his gracious benefits
He hath bestow'd on thee.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Table Second.

[Before the Service.]

'COMMUNICANTS! you have sat down at this table to commemorate the death of your Redeemer. It was the solemn charge of your Lord himself, "Do this in remembrance of me." We are so formed by the Author of our frame, that the memorial of a friend who is no more, and the token of a love that is past, has a wonderful power over the affections. The slightest circumstance that recals a departed friend, awakens the sensibility of the soul. The smallest relic acquires a value: a robe, a ring, or a portrait, calls up a history, on which the heart delights to dwell. How much more, the memorials of our glorious Redeemer, the dearest friend of the whole human race?

'Remember now, then, O Communicants! the *Man of sorrows*. Remember his state and sufferings, from Bethlehem to the cross. Mark the reception he met with, despised and rejected of men: he came to his own, and his own received him not. In the midst of scorners, in the hands of persecutors, mark the patience and meekness of the Lamb of God. Follow him to the court of Herod, the hall of Pilate, and the hill of Calvary. See him at last, forsaken of God. Was there ever sorrow like unto his sorrow?

"Turn now, Christians, with hearts penetrated with grief, and bleeding at a sight so sad, to the table that is now before you. You are now to engage in the most solemn ordinance of our holy religion. You are going to transact with the King of Glory, now far from men and their cruelties, in the highest heavens; before whom ten thousand times ten thousand angels bow down and adore. You are about to commemorate that scene at which the sun grew dark and the earth trembled. You are going to seal your souls to the day of everlasting redemption. Not the last hour of your lives can be more awful than the

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present. In the view of so great a covenant, I call upon you to banish all worldly passions, all unhallowed affections, all the leaven of malice and of wrath, and to sit with reverence, with faith, and with love, at the feast of salvation, of which you are now to partake.

[Service.]

"The Lord Jesus, that night in which he was be-
"trayed, took bread," &c.

[After the Service.]

"How awful is this place! Surely God is here,
"and I knew it not. This is none other than the
"house of God; and this is the gate of heaven."
These were the words of Jacob, when at Bethel he awoke from a dream in which he was favoured with the visions of God. The Almighty gave him this promise, "In thy seed shall all the families of the "earth be blessed."

'This promise, O Christians! is fulfilled. This great redemption is accomplished by him, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

'While you now sit with him at his table, the Patriarchs who foresaw this day, the Prophets who foretold it, and the righteous men who desired to see it, are beholding your Redeemer face to face, and sitting on thrones in heaven, where they now dwell in the presence of God; where they now sing the high praises of the Lord. My friends! there are vacant thrones. Say, are they vacant for you? Do you look on him whom you have pierced with repenting eyes? Do your hearts glow with love to God, with love to Christ, with love to the brethren? Do your bosoms expand with benevolence to the whole creation of God? Do you aspire to the regions above, and breathe towards the mansions of immortality? Then, my friends, these thrones are vacant for you! As sure as if an angel descended from his orb, and hailed you to your seat at the right hand of the Father, so sure will be your arrival in the promised land. If you ful-

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all the vows you now make, the gates will lift up their heads that ye may enter in: your blessed Redeemer will call unto you, "Well done, good and faithful "servants, enter ye into the joys of your Lord."

'Thither, O Communicants, may ye all go! May God himself keep your feet from falling—hear this day your vows, and seal you to the day of redemption!'

"As ye have received the Lord Jesus," &c.

PSALM ciii.

3 ALL thine iniquities who doth
Most graciously forgive;
Who thy diseases all and pains
Doth heal, and thee relieve.
4 Who doth redeem thy life, that thou
To death may'st not go down:
Who thee with loving kindness doth
And tender mercies crown.

TABLE THIRD.

[Before the Service.]

"COMMUNICANTS! the prophet Daniel foretold concerning our Saviour, "That he should con-"firm a covenant with many." It is for this purpose that we have assembled this day. You sit down at this table to avouch the Lord to be your God, and to join yourselves unto him, in a perpetual covenant never to be broken.

'If with sincere and upright hearts, if with true repentance and faith unfeigned, you accept the terms of the Gospel, then all the blessings of the new covenant are in this ordinance sealed to your souls. Then the promises of the covenant become your portion: Then the blood of the covenant pleads for you in heaven: Then the messenger of the covenant brings you the glad tidings of salvation: Then the Mediator of the covenant gives you access to the holiest of all, by that new and living way which he hath consecrated with his flesh within the vail.

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"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion," said the Prophet of old, "for behold thy King cometh!" "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion," say we now, "for behold thy King *is* come!" Sing hosanna: Strew his path with flowers: He who loved us is come! When Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, the Jews, observing his emotion, cried out, "Behold how he "loved him!" Christians! The ordinance which we are now to celebrate, represents the Redeemer, not as shedding tears, but shedding his blood for his friends. Much greater reason have we then to cry out,— "Behold how he loved the human race!"

'My friends, this is a feast of joy: This is the eucharist, or song of thanksgiving. When the Patriarchs saw afar off this day which we now commemorate, they rejoiced: The prophets broke out into strains of exultation, when they foretold its arrival: The angels, when they announced its approach, tuned their harps to higher joy, and sung, "Glory to God "in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to "the children of men." It is a token of love which had no beginning, and which shall never have an end. Like the bow appearing in the cloud in the day of rain, which the hand of the Most High hath bended, it is a memorial of the world's being preserved from one deluge, and a signal that it shall never be destroyed by another.

'To commemorate this great salvation, and to enter into covenant with God, I now distribute among you the symbols of the body and of the blood of Christ.

[Service.]

"The Lord Jesus, that night in which he was be- "trayed took bread," &c.

[After the Service.]

"I will arise and go to my Father, and say, Father, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee." In-

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stead of being in covenant with God, I heretofore made a covenant with sin and with death. That covenant, from henceforth, I disannul: Be it written in the volume of thy book, that henceforth I am thine! Accept of a heart which has been long estranged from thee: Receive a prodigal returning to his Father's house. If I have done iniquity in times past, I will do so no more. Lord! thou who knowest all things, thou knowest how sincerely I am resolved to serve thee.

'Communicants, you have now joined yourselves in covenant to God: You have vowed unto the Most High, and I hope you shall never go back. Your hands have this day been lifted up unto the Lord, let them never afterwards be defiled with sin: Your eyes have this day beheld a crucified Redeemer, let them henceforth be turned away from beholding iniquity.

"I make no doubt, Christians, that at this moment you are sincere, and in earnest to fulfil the engagements you have now come under. But ah! do you know the deceitfulness and treachery of your own souls? Set a watch, I beseech you, upon your hearts. Give them unto God; for unless he keep the house, the watchmen watch in vain.

'Finally, my brethren, trust always in your Saviour, for he is mighty to save. He suffered, but he overcame. The hour of his agony was also the hour of his triumph. Then he destroyed death, and him that had the power of death. The Lion of the tribe of Judah bruised the head of the serpent. He cancelled the handwriting that was against us, fixed it to his cross, and left it there as a trophy of his victory. He dismissed the Cherubim that were placed in the garden of Eden; and sheathed the flaming sword which turned every way to guard the tree of life. He hath opened the gates of heaven, and now calls upon us to follow after him, and to enter in.

"As ye have received the Lord Jesus," &c.

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PSALM ciii.

8 THE Lord our God is merciful,
And he is gracious,
Long-suffering, and slow to wrath,
In mercy plenteous.
9 He will not chide continually,
Nor keep his anger still.
10 With us he dealt not as we sinn'd,
Nor did requite our ill.

TABLE FOURTH.

[Before the Service.]

'COMMUNICANTS! After the first celebration of the supper, our Lord looked forward to the hour of his departure, and said, "I will not hence-"forth taste the fruit of the vine, until the day that "I shall drink it new in the kingdom of the Father." When we have now assembled to celebrate this supper, it becomes us, in imitation of his example, to look forward to the hour of *our* departure, and consider this opportunity, as perhaps the last which we shall enjoy. We recollect the brevity and uncertainty of human life. We have upon our minds the sad remembrance of friends that are departed, and of companions that are no more, who, on former occasions, sat with us at this table. Now they have gone to their rest; to the house appointed for all living.

'Let us then, for a while, shut out the living world, descend into the chambers of the grave, and, like the Prophet of old, take a view of the vale of death.

'Son of man! what dost thou behold? Dust and ashes, and desolation; dead men's bones scattered around. How still and fearful is the tomb! Who lie here in these mansions that are so sad? The handwriting is blotted out: the inscriptions are obliterated; The land of desolation has become still more desolate: The things that were, have become as if they had never been. No trace remains of a glory that is passed,

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'But let us take a nearer view of this house of deep forgetfulness. Fellow mortals! around you, and beneath you, are the ashes of your fathers, and the bones of your friends. The remains of those whom you once knew, and loved, are here; The companions of your youthful years: The partners of your tender hours. Now they have no more connection with the living world.

'But shall it always continue so? Shall they who are thus dead, never live again? Have the wise and the worthy, the great and the good, passed into utter annihilation, to exist no more?

'No, Communicants! I swear to you by the groans and agonies of suffering virtue; by the blood of the martyrs which is under the altar: I swear by that tomb from which your Lord arose, as the first fruits of those that sleep, and by these heavens which opened to receive him, and where in glory he now sits enthroned, that *death* shall not prevail in the universe of God. His reign is only for a season: You shall awake from his sleep, you shall break his bands asunder; and rise and live again.

"When Jesus arose from the grave, he proclaimed *immortality* to man. When Jesus ascended up on high the cloud which covered the eternal world was withdrawn: the everlasting doors were thrown open, and the heaven of heavens revealed to mortal view.

"In the name, and by the authority of Him who was once dead, but is now alive, I now proceed to give you the bread of life.

[Service.]

"The Lord Jesus, that night on which he was be-
"trayed, took bread," &c.

[After the Service.]

"Communicants! We mourn not for those which are asleep, as if there were no hope. We believe that Jesus died, and rose again; even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For the

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Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

'I am the resurrection and the life, said our Lord: whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die. Blessed immortality! to live for ever, and with Christ the Conqueror of death, and the Captain of our salvation!

'I heard a voice from heaven, says St John, saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: they rest, saith the Spirit, from their labours, and their works do follow them.

'Loud as the sound of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, this voice comes from a multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands,—from patriarchs, prophets, apostles, confessors, martyrs, and righteous men, who beckon from the skies, and call upon us to "come up hither."

'Celestial society! Ye spirits of the just made perfect, we hear your voice! You have now finished your course, you have entered into bliss, and have received the crown of glory! We now combat with flesh and blood; with sense and passion; but yours is the victory. You taste the pleasures that are pure and unalloyed: yours is the joy of paradise; the white robe, the crown, and the sceptre. At a distance we adore: you stand in the presence of God; you see him as he is; you enjoy the smile of Divinity unveiled. We behold our Saviour darkly in the symbols of this institution: you see him face to face, the Friend, the Patron, and the Redeemer of mankind!

'But we, too, hope to become members of the general assembly of the church of the First-born; and that what you now are, we shall be. Hear from thy throne, O God! the desire of thy people; and carry us at last, from this table where we now sit, and

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from which we are about to arise, to the feast of the Lamb in heaven, which will never end!

"Communicants! as ye have received the Lord "Jesus," &c. *

Psalm xxiii.

1 THE Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
2 He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.
3 My soul he doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Ev'n for his own name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill:
For thou art with me, and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.
5 My table thou hast furnished,
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.
6 Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me:
And in God's house for evermore,
My dwelling-place shall be.

Concluding Exhortation from the Pulpit.

'MY brethren and friends! our solemn work of communion is now over. It has been performed with much external decency, and seeming devotion. I presume not to judge of the heart,—that is the prerogative of Almighty God. Proceeding according to the judgment of charity, I conclude

* The Service of four Tables is only given here. But in general, the Tables are more numerous; sometimes extending to ten or twelve, or more. This is owing partly to the populousness of particular parishes, and partly to the smallness of churches, which often can admit only of Tables to accommodate thirty or forty Communicants at a time.

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that your intentions have been pure, and your hearts upright before the Lord. In this view I congratulate you on the good confession which you have this day made before many witnesses. You have given your hearts to him who redeemed you from the wrath to come: and I have authority to assure you, that you will never have cause to repent.

'Henceforth you belong to the family of Jesus. Your Lord now says to you, "I call you not servants, "but friends." The blessings which he bequeaths to his friends who have sat with him at his table, are summed up in those precious and expressive words which he spoke to his disciples at the first institution of the Sacrament,—"Peace I leave with you, my "peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, "give I unto you.—I will see you again, and your "hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man tak-"eth from you—ask, and ye shall receive, that your "joy may be full." These are the words of life; and have in them a power to give comfort to the mind in life and death, in time, and through eternity.

'Yet, my brethren, draw nigh, and give ear to me.—It is only to those who have prepared themselves according to the preparation of the sanctuary, who have washed their hands in innocence before they approached to the altar of the Most High, that these blessings are promised. It is to be feared, that with many persons on such occasions as this, and *perhaps at this very time*, the performance of the solemn duty has been rather a matter of form, than of true devotion. To such I must say, *The bread is not the bread of life, nor the cup the cup of blessing.* Their hearts may have burned for a time within them; but this flame will soon be extinguished. Were I endowed with the power of looking into futurity, and of beholding the after lives of this assembly, what might I foretel? But without pretending to such a power, I may predict, from the experience of ages past, that not a few will break their sacramental vows, and profane that holy name by which they are called: that by

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secret sins, and open wickedness, they will crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame: that he will be wounded in the house of his friends: that perhaps before the sun shall have ended his course, in the heavens,—that perhaps before the cock shall have crowed twice, the best resolutions will be forgotten; that one man shall prefer the gains of iniquity, another the cup of drunkenness, and all their darling sins to the tender mercies of the God of Peace, and the dying love of a crucified Redeemer! "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," (it may be said still), "thou who stonedst the prophets, and killest them "who are sent unto thee, how often would the bless- "ed Jesus gather thee under his wings, as a hen ga- "thereth her brood, and ye will not!"

'But, my friends, we hope better things of you, though we thus speak. Many, it is to be hoped, (and fain would I say, *all*,) who have sat with Jesus this day, will sit again with him in his Father's kingdom. And for your encouragement,—He will be always with you. Over the future there hangs a dark cloud, which the eye of Providence only can pierce. In the world you shall have tribulation. But let not your souls be troubled: You believe in God, believe also in Christ. When you go through the waters he will be with you. Amidst all the changes of this fleeting and turbulent scene, you will have one friend and him mighty to save, who will never fail you: You will have a city which cannot be shaken, a kingdom which cannot be moved, and a crown that fadeth not away.

'For you the joys which accompany religion are preparing. Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart. Walk then as becometh the children of the resurrection, and the heirs of glory. Keep yourselves unspotted from the world, and let your conversation be in heaven, from whence you look for the Saviour. And when your hearts fail, you have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ

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the righteous, the propitiation for your souls. Let us pray.

PRAYER.

"We come now, O God, from the table of thy Son, with grateful and with joyful hearts, to prostrate ourselves before thy throne. Blessed, for ever blessed be the Lord! that our eyes have seen this day of the Son of man: We will for ever remember it as one of the days of the right hand of the Most High. We have seen the King in his beauty: We have seen the Messiah's reign, which, of old, thou didst keep hid from prophets, and from princes, and from righteous men. Thou hast made all thy goodness to pass before us: Thou hast opened the fountain of life and hast poured the treasures of heaven upon earth. Thou hast this day put into our hands the dearest pledges of thy love: Thou hast permitted us to sit down with Jesus, and partake of that feast through which we hope for eternal life.

"Blessed Jesus! in obedience to thy commandments, and in commemoration of thy dying love, we have this day joined ourselves unto thee in an everlasting covenant, and vowed, that whether living or dying, in time or through eternity, we will serve thee, be thine, and thine only. In obedience to thy commandments, we have joined ourselves to the Church militant upon earth, and rest in hope of joining the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven, when we shall be admitted to the presence of God, the merciful Judge of all; to Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant; to an innumerable company of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect; to all the host of heaven, who are now sitting on thrones, and singing hosannas to the Highest. With them we join in ascribing praise and blessing to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. Our souls do magnify the Lord: Our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.

"Pardon, O God, what thy pure eyes may have

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seen amiss in any part of this day's service. Forgive the preparation which has not been the preparation of the sanctuary. Forbid that the bread of life should become the means of death. May what our eyes have seen, our ears have heard, and our hands have handled, keep their hold of our hearts: May we feel the transforming power of that death which we have commemorated, and walk among men as the redeemed of the Lord. May we carry into life the spirit of this day. O grant us aid from above, and the communications of thy grace; to keep alive upon our minds a sense of thy amazing love, to second the good impressions that have been made upon us, and to assist us in performing the solemn vows we have this day made unto the Lord. Let us not think, when the Sacrament is over, that the work is ended. Having begun our journey, let us not wander in the wilderness, and lose sight of the heavenly Canaan. Comfort our hearts under the hardships of our pilgrimage: Cheer our minds in the waste and howling desert: Bear us up under the swellings of Jordan, and bring us in safety to the promised land. May the Gospel become effectually unto us the glad tidings of great joy, by conveying to us the pardon of all our sins, and peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

" For these purposes, send thy Holy Spirit to abide with us for ever. Sanctify us to thy service; subdue the power of sin in our hearts; save us in the hour of temptation, and preserve us to thy heavenly kingdom. Let not the suggestions of a carnal mind, nor the solicitations of sensual pleasure, nor the allurements of a corrupted world, seduce us from the path that conducts to glory and immortality. In prosperity may we reflect, that too often a serpent lurks among the flowers: In adversity may we be enabled to see thy mercy shining through the cloud; and be convinced that we are in the hands of infinite Wisdom, who knows what is best for us, and will make all things work for our good. May we fill our stations with integrity, with usefulness, and with

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honour, holding fast the testimony of a good conscience.

"We would humbly offer up our prayers in behalf of these our native lands. Preserve the liberties of the British constitution inviolate to the latest posterity. O thou who art King of kings, and Lord of ords we commend to thy protection, thy servant his Majesty King George. Endow him from on high, with all princely virtues; place wise counsellors around his throne, men actuated with the fear of God, and with an ardent zeal for the good, the liberty, and the glory of the people. Bless our gracious Queen Charlotte, his Royal Highness George Prince of Wales, and all the other branches of the Royal Family. Bless all in high rank and authority. May they adorn the stations they possess, and by their influence and example, form the manners of the people to virtue. Bless thy servants the ministers of the everlasting Gospel. May they be endued with the Spirit of their Master, and preach the good Word, not from vanity and ostentation, nor to gain the praises of men, but from a regard to the welfare of souls, from the love of truth, of godliness, and of Thee.

"We humbly offer up our prayers in behalf of this congregation. Let the light of thy countenance be lifted up upon them; and bless all ranks, high and low, rich and poor. Guide and direct them by thy counsel, while here below; and at last receive them unto thyself, that where thou art, there they may be also, enjoying blessedness at thy right hand for evermore.

"Grant us all, we beseech Thee, that we may partake of the Spirit of our holy calling, and exercise the virtues of our heavenly state. Raise our affections from earth to heaven, and may we become followers of those who, by their faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises. Let not an inordinate affection to earthly objects, withdraw our eyes from heavenly things, or dissolve our connection with the joys above; but may we live on earth as the citizens of heaven; may we pass through things temporal, so

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as not to neglect things eternal. May we walk in the world as becomes the dignity of the rational character, as becomes the sanctity of the religious profession, and the purity of the Christian hope.

"Oh! that it may be the stedfast purpose of our lives, to hold fast our integrity so long as we shall live. Let not the fear of evil, nor the fashion of the world, nor the vain splendour of life, turn us aside from the right path. In every department of duty, may we approve ourselves unto thee; and in every situation of life, may we possess that peace of mind which the world cannot give, and cannot take away. May we pass through life unspotted from the world, and end our days in innocence and peace.

"Be with us now in singing praises to thy name; and come forth with us in the evening, to worship again before thee, and to hear instructions from thy holy word. Now to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be glory, and honour, and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Psalm cxxi.

1 I TO the hills will lift mine eyes
From whence doth come mine aid.
2 My safety cometh from the Lord,
Who heav'n and earth hath made.
3 Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will
He slumber that thee keeps.
4 Behold, he that keeps Israel,
He slumbers not, nor sleeps.
5 The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shade,
On thy right hand doth stay.
6 The moon by night thee shall not smite,
Nor yet the sun by day.
7 The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall
Preserve thee from all ill.
8 Henceforth thy going out and in
God keep for ever will.

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BLESSING.

[The whole Congregation stand up when the blessing is pronounced.]

"May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you, and all the people of God; henceforth and for evermore. *Amen.*"

EVENING SERVICE.

PARAPHRASE.

HEBREWS iv. 14. to the end. *

1 WHERE high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands;
A great high priest our nature wears;
The guardian of mankind appears.
2 He who for men their Surety stood,
And pour'd on earth his precious blood,
Pursues in heaven his mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.
3 Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.

* Besides the Psalms of David, a Collection of Translations and Paraphrases in verse, of several passages of Sacred Scripture, together with some Hymns, has been, of late years, used in several Congregations in public worship; and this, by permission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This Paraphrase of Hebrews iv. 14. and likewise the Hymn which closes the following EVENING SERVICE, are taken from that Collection, and both of them were composed by the Author of these Sermons. See Mr Logan's Poems, published in 1781.

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4 Our fellow-suff'rer yet retains
A fellow feeling of our pains;
And still remembers in the skies,
His tears, his agonies, and cries.
5 In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of Sorrows had a part;
He sympathizes with our grief,
And to the suff'rer sends relief.
6 With boldness therefore at the throne,
Let us make all our sorrows known;
And ask the aids of heav'nly power,
To help us in the evil hour.

Prayer.

"Father Almighty, we come again into thy presence, with the voice of thanksgiving, and of praise, to worship at the footstool of thy throne. May our prayers come up before thee, as the incense of old; and the lifting up of our hands, as the evening sacrifice! To all temples, thou preferrest the pure and humble heart; to all burnt-offerings, the sacrifice of prayer and of praise.

"The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. Thou dwellest not in temples made with hands. The universe is the altar of God. Thy worshippers are, wherever are thy works; every knee bends, and every tongue utters thy praise. Thou lookest down from the height of heaven, upon all the works of thy hands. Thou art clothed with majesty, and dwellest in light. Thou art a God of pure eyes: thou art glorious in holiness. Thou lookest upon the sun, and it shineth not: the heavens are not clean in thy sight. The angels who surround thy throne, continually worship thee, saying, Holy, holy, holy, art thou, Lord God Almighty! the whole heavens, and the whole earth, are full of thy glory!

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever: thy dominion ruleth over all: the sceptre of thy kingdom is altogether a right sceptre. Thy tender mercies are over

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all thy works. Thy goodness falls everywhere like the dew, and extends like the beams of the sun. Order and beauty attend thy steps: mercy and love direct the whole train of thine administrations. Thou lookest down upon the highest and upon the lowest of thy works: thou carest for the raven of the desert: thou feedest the fowls of the air when they cry unto thee. Thou adornest the grass with green, and deckest the lilies of the field with beauty superior to the glory of kings. Thou hast created all being at first with a father's care, and thou dost still watch over them with a father's eye. Thou, the Lord JEHOVAH, rejoicest in thy works; and thy works, O Lord JEHOVAH, rejoice in thee! Whatever hath being blesses thee: whatever hath life sings thy praise. Who is like unto the Lord our God that dwelleth on high!

"We, too, the children of men, desire to accord with the rest of thy creation, to join in the joy of universal nature, and to bear a part in the hymn which the living world continually sings to thee. Thou hast raised us above the animal creation: thou hast opened unto us the source of pure and intellectual pleasure: thou hast endowed us with higher life than what pertains to the body; and set before us a better world than that which we now inhabit. Thy goodness is new to us every day of our lives. Thou leadest us to the green pastures, and by the still waters: thou guardest us from the arrow that flieth in darkness, and from destruction which rageth at noon-day. The lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places: the sun doth not smite us by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord buildeth the house: the Lord keepeth the city. Blessed for ever be the name of the Lord: because the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, let the isles be glad, and the inhabitants of the earth rejoice.

"But, alas! what is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou shouldst visit him. The child of the dust, whose strength is weakness, whose wisdom is folly, whose goodness is imperfection, whose life is altogether vanity! We be-

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hold the heavens, but discern not him who stretched them over our heads! we hear the voice, and speech, and language, of universal nature proclaiming the great Creator: we hear the night speaking unto the night, and the day reporting unto the day, telling of him that made them, and yet we learn not to know thee as we might, nor become wise unto salvation.

"Have mercy upon us, O God, not for our own sakes, but for the sake of him whom thou lovest always, our Advocate and Intercessor with thee. Help, Lord, or else we perish: extend thy powerful arm, and snatch us from the devouring deep. Reconcile us unto thyself, through the blood of Jesus, whom thou hast set forth to be a propitiation for the sins of the world, who suffered for us on the accursed tree, that he might bring us to God, and purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. For his sake forgive all our iniquities: Receive us graciously, and love us freely. See, O God, the contrition and repentance of our hearts. Hear the vows which this day we have offered up at the table of a Redeemer. O our Father, receive again thy children unto thee, who return with their whole heart, and strength, and soul. Framer of the bodies which now stand before thee, Father of the spirits which now ascend unto thee in prayer, take thine own unto thyself. Our spirits magnify, and love, and bless thee the Lord: As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so pant our souls after thee, O God. The desire of our hearts is unto thee, and to the remembrance of thy name!

"May our purposes of amendment and sincere endeavours after purity of heart and life, be not like the early cloud and dew, which soon pass away, and are no more; but like the morning light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Teach us to shun every temptation to sin: may we neither sit in the chair of the scorner, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor walk after the counsel of the ungodly. May we study the laws and commandments of our God:

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Make them our meditation by night, and our practice by day; that we may be like trees planted by the rivers of water, which yield their fruit in their season, and whose leaf is ever green. Let not the course of days, and months, and years, which we enjoy, pass over us in vain, to rise up against us in sad remembrance at the evening of life, and to fill our departing hours with terror and remorse. Let not the time of our pilgrimage in this world be one vast blank, barren of improvement, and blotted with conscious guilt; but may we pass the time of our sojourning here in thy fear, daily abounding in the graces of Christianity, and the fruits of holiness, adding to our faith virtue, and one grace to another, till we arrive at full conformity to thy blessed image, and be partakers with the saints in light. May we be translated from the kingdom of darkness, to the kingdom of thy Son, and entitled to all the privileges of the children of God.

"Bestow upon us that faith which purifieth the heart, and worketh by love. Grant unto us that repentance from dead works, to serve the living God, which leadeth unto life, and is not to be repented of. Fill our hearts with that charity which is the bond of perfection, which suffereth long, and is kind, which beareth all things, which hopeth all things, and which endureth all things. Inspire us with that wisdom which cometh from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. May we exercise at all times a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, and have the testimony of our own hearts, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our lives and conversations in the world.

"For these purposes, O God, inspire us with thy Spirit, and strengthen us with all might in the inner man, that we may press forward to perfection. May we acquire that humility which afterwards shall be exalted; that mourning which shall be comforted; those penitential tears which shall be changed into eternal consolations; that contempt of the world to

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which belongs the kingdom of heaven; that purity of heart which shall fit us to see God; and perform all those works of mercy, and labours of love, for which the kingdom of our Lord was prepared before the foundations of the world were laid. Grant that neither the splendour of any thing that is great, nor the conceit of any thing that is good within us, may ever withdraw our eyes from looking upon ourselves as sinful dust and ashes; but that we may persevere with patience, and humility, and zeal, unto the end. Grant that when we shall depart from this life, we may sleep in the Lord, and when the morning of the resurrection dawns over the world, we may lift up our heads with triumph, and rejoicing, receive the blessed sentence of those who having done well, are called upon to enter into their Master's joy.

"And now, our waiting eyes, O God, are towards thee. May the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord our strength and our Redeemer. All these our humble prayers, we offer up in the name and through the intercession of Christ, to whom with the Father, and Holy Spirit, be all praise and glory. *Amen.*"

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EVENING SERMON.

MATTHEW xxviii. 6.

Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

WHEN our Saviour expired upon the cross, the cause of Christianity seemed to be lost. Rejected by that nation to whom he was sent, condemned under the forms of a legal trial, and crucified as a malefactor before all the people, an effectual bar seemed to have been put for ever to all his designs. It then seemed that all was over. A people whom their prophets taught to look for a king, did not look for him to come down from a cross; a nation who expected the appearance of a Messiah, did not expect him to appear from the grave. His followers were few in number, and feeble in spirit. Although he had frequently foretold his death, the idea of a temporal prince was so strong in their minds, that they could not reconcile themselves to the thought of a suffering Saviour; and though he had also on various occasions foretold his resurrection, they were so much under the power of prejudices, deeply rooted, that they either did not understand, or did not believe, his predictions. When he was apprehended by a band of soldiers, they forsook him and fled; they had not courage to attend him in the last hour of his life; to go with him to the tribunal and to the cross: Afar off only, they followed with their eyes, and beheld with tears, him whom they expected to behold no more. Then they gave up all for lost. The sun, which was soon after darkened by a preternatural eclipse, and the rock which was rent asunder by an

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earthquake, appeared to be the sad tokens of a kingdom that was to be no more.

Dark and dismal were the shades of that night which descended on the Saviour's tomb: The hearts of the disciples were troubled, and their Comforter was gone. All the scenes of their past lives, the miracles they had seen, the discourses they had heard, the hopes they had entertained, were like a dream; they abandoned themselves to despair, and as we learn from the Evangelist Luke, they were about to leave Jerusalem, and betake themselves to their old employments.

While the enemies of Jesus triumphed, and his friends lamented, the counsels of heaven were executing, and the operation of the Almighty was going forward. We read in the Gospel of Matthew,—"In "the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn to-"wards the first day of the week, came Mary Magda-"lene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And "behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel "of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and "rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. "His countenance was like lightning, and his rai-"ment white as snow. And for fear of him, the keep-"ers did shake, and became as dead men. And the "angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not "ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus which was cruci-"fied. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said: "come see the place where the Lord lay."

The nativity of our Lord had been announced by an angel to the shepherds of Bethlehem. "While "they were abiding in the field, and keeping watch "over their flocks by night, Lo, the angel of the "Lord came unto them, and the glory of the Lord "shone round about them; and the angel said unto "them, Fear not, for behold I bring unto you glad "tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; "for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In like manner, his second nativity, his resurrection to a new

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life, was here announced by an angel. What emotions would arise in the minds of these ministers of heaven, who had attended him through his life, we cannot tell: this only we know, that "into these "things they desired to look." Much more then doth it become us to contemplate the life, and death, and resurrection of our Lord; for he took not on him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. Christians! you have this day beheld your Saviour set forth crucified among you; let us now contemplate him as arising from the dead, and appearing in glory: you have already sat at the foot of the cross, and I hope reaped benefit from the commemoration of your Redeemer's passion; let me now carry you to the tomb, to behold "the place where the "Lord lay."

Behold, then, in the *first* place, in the resurrection of your Lord, the proof that the redemption of the world is accomplished.

Our salvation is everywhere ascribed in Scripture, to the death and passion of our Saviour. As our great High Priest, he made an atonement for the sins of the world upon the cross; his death was our redemption, and his blood the ransom that was paid for his soul; but his resurrection was the proof, that the sacrifice which he offered up was accepted by God, and that the price which he paid, was available for our recovery. By his suffering unto death, we were freed from condemnation; but our freedom was not made manifest till he arose from the grave. His resurrection then is the basis of the whole Christian institution, and the ground of our faith and of our hope in him. That Christ appeared on earth as a Great Prophet; that he passed his days in instructing and reforming the world; and that after a life of eminent and exemplary goodness, he died the death of a malefactor, was common to him and others, whom God had raised up to be the lights of the world, and patterns to mankind. Thus the prophets of old were persecuted and destroyed by sundry kinds of death:

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thus the martyrs, since the time of our Lord, were cut off in a cruel and ignominious manner; but in their *deaths* there was no expiation for sin; the blood of the prophets and of the martyrs spoke no such language; their blood, cried, indeed, to heaven,—not for mercy, but for vengeance against a guilty world. If Christ had died like one of them, and had been heard of no more, how should we have believed that his death had atoned to the penitent, for all the blood that had been shed from the foundation of the world? How should we have believed that the whole earth had obtained remission of sin from God, by destroying one prophet more? Although he had declared that he was to be offered up as a sacrifice, and to give his life a ransom for many, if he had never appeared again, how should we have known that the sacrifice was accepted, or that the ransom was paid? The natural conclusion then to be drawn was, that his labours had been in vain. Then might we have said with the disciples who were going to Emmaus, "We trusted that it had "been He who was to have redeemed Israel;" but now all our hopes are buried in his grave. When he burst the bands of death, and rose victorious from the tomb, then it was manifest to all, that he had finished the work which the Father gave him to do. For if he had not accomplished his undertaking, and expiated the sins of the world, he had never been released from the prison of the grave. When he arose, therefore, and brought back with him the pardon which he had sealed with his blood; when, instead of executing wrath upon his enemies, he sent again the offer of peace and reconciliation, and took upon himself to be their intercessor, as he had already been their sacrifice, what room was there to doubt of the efficacy of his death, the efficacy of which was so undeniably confirmed by his resurrection?

Here, therefore, we hail the completion of that plan by which the world was to be redeemed; here we rejoice over the finishing of the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness is to dwell, and come

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to the close of the celestial song, which ascribed glory to God in the highest, peace upon the earth, and good-will towards men. Now, we may join in the triumphant language of the Apostle, "It is God that "justifieth? who is he that condemneth? It is Christ "that died, yea, rather that is risen, who is even at "the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." As if he had said, "who can condemn those whom God hath justified, and for whom "Christ hath died? Our great High Priest hath now "offered up the sacrifice which was requisite for the "redemption of the world. The wrath of God is atoned; the guilt of sin is taken away; peace is made "between God and man; and there is joy in heaven "over the world of the redeemed." That this sacrifice was acceptable and meritorious in the sight of God, he hath testified unto all men, by raising his Son from the dead, by exalting him to his own right hand, and committing to him the sceptre of Providence, to rule and govern for the good of his church.

In the *second* place, Christians, behold your Saviour at his resurrection entering into his glory.

His first appearance was not distinguished by marks of greatness or splendour. The wise men who came from the east to worship the king of the Jews, expected not to find him a babe at Bethlehem, lying in a manger. Descended of humble parents, and born in a mean condition. he passed his early life in obscurity, and in the labours of poverty. What the Prophet calls the "stem from Jesse," was, at its first appearance, but a root out of a dry ground; it had no form nor comeliness, for which it could have been desired. Hitherto it had been only unknown and obscure; and at the time of his appearing unto Israel, he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But even while he stood forth in the power of the Lord, and confirmed his mission by the miracles which he wrought, the opposition to him increased, and every act of charity he did to others, became a new source of misery to himself. During this time

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in which he went about doing good to all the sons of men, he had not where to lay his head. When he cast out devils, he was immediately charged with being in league with the prince of them. When he sat with publicans and sinners, he was called a glutton and a wine-bibber. When he healed the sick of their infirmities, and forgave their sins, then was he called a blasphemer, and an encroacher on the prerogative of God. When he restored the withered hand, and cured the blind or the lame on the Sabbath-day, then is he no longer fit to live. These were such offences as nothing but his death could expiate. And to death at last they brought him. He is betrayed by one of his own disciples, and carried to judgment. He is charged with the most opprobrious crimes. In cruel sport, they pay him the honours of a prince; they crown him with thorns; they put a reed into his hand; they bow the knee before him, and, with profane and impious derision, cry; "Hail, King of the Jews." And that nothing might be wanting, to shew how much he was despised and rejected of men, the question was put between him and a murderer, which should be released; and with one voice, the people answered, "Release unto us "Barabbas." He was then nailed to the accursed tree, and died the death of a malefactor.

And is this the Messiah whom the Jews expected, and whom the prophets had foretold? Is this He, concerning whom Isaiah had prophesied, "Unto us a Son "is born, unto us a Child is given, and his name "shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty "God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Is this He who was to raise up the tabernacle of David; who was to repair the desolations of many ages; who was to sit upon the throne of Zion, extend his dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth? Yes, it is He! But, as the Scriptures foretold, he must suffer before he enter into his glory. Hence, saith the same Prophet, when he shall be stricken for the transgression of the people, and

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make his soul an offering for sin, then he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. At his resurrection, the prophecies of the Old Testament are understood, and the scandal of the cross is wiped away. The history of the man of sorrows ends, and the Lord of Glory appears. A brighter train of years begins, and a new era of happy time revolves. From the cloud which had concealed him long, he now issues forth in the beauties of immortality; from the veil which had obscured him in the days of his flesh, the splendour of his Divinity now shines forth; celestial rays circle and distinguish his head; and he appears to be the Son of God with power, when he comes in triumph from the tomb, having subdued the powers of death, and leading captivity captive. He now sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied; he enters on the joy that was set before him; and has all power committed to him in heaven and in earth.

In the *third* place, Christians, behold in the resurrection of your Lord, your nature restored to its original dignity.

Man was at first made after the image of God, clothed with the robe of innocence, and crowned with the honours of immortality. There was no discord among the principles of his frame; no darkness in his mind, and no disorder in his heart. Happy and harmonious was the temper of his soul. Order, the great law of heaven, was also the law of man. He had a paradise without, and a fairer paradise within. But by his disobedience and fall he became a different person: his nature was degraded, and his dignity was lost. He who was the Lord of the inferior world, and was invested with dominion over the works of nature, was now sunk into a state little superior to the beasts that perish. This change was the death of the man whom God had created; the divine life was no more; the image of God lay buried under the ruins of iniquity. Hence the human form in Scripture is called a "body of death;" and the world is

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said to be "dead in trespasses and sins." But as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection to life. As in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive. "The creature was made subject to vanity "not willingly." We consented not to the degradation of our nature; and he who subjected us in hope hath restored us again. Christ rose as the Representative of all his people; as the Leader of an innumerable multitude, who shall follow him into the heavens. Hence we are said in Scripture to be begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead; to be made alive with Christ; to be risen with him; and sit with him in heavenly places. Here then you behold your nature rising anew from the tomb of Christ; fair as when it first came from the hands of the Creator, when he saw his own image, and pronounced it good. Here you behold it rising with additional honour: made at first a little lower than the angels it was assumed by one who was greater than they, and is now dignified in heaven by him before whose throne the angels of God worship.

In the *last* place, Christians, behold in the resurrection of Christ, the proof and the earnest of your own resurrection.

Our Saviour not only taught the immortality of the soul, but also the resurrection of the body. This doctrine was new to the world, and contrary to the observation of mankind; for there is nothing in the whole compass of nature, that yields a similitude to dust and ashes rising up again into organized bodies, and to perpetual life. It required, therefore, a proof of a particular kind, which it obtained; for as a proof that the dead were to arise, our Saviour arose from the dead. Hence God is said to have given assurance to all men of the general resurrection, by raising his Son from the dead. This subject is handled professedly, and at great length, by the Apostle Paul, in a most eloquent discourse to the Corinthians, part of which I shall now read to you. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 21, 22, 23. "But now is Christ risen from the

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" dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. " For since by man came death, by man came also the " resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, " even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But eve- " ry man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; " afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

In the times of the apostle, this doctrine was more felt than it is now; a strong impression of immortality did then animate the disciples of Jesus. From whence, but from this doctrine, proceeded the zeal and spirit of the primitive Christians, who embraced the religion of Jesus at the expence of all that was dear, and at the peril of their lives. The sword of the persecutor had no terrors, when they saw it succeeded by a crown of glory. When they looked on the shore of bliss and immortality, they trembled not, though they knew they had to swim through a sea of blood. Even when death was before their eyes, their hearts sprung with joy, and their hopes began to bloom. Not the frown of the tyrant, nor the face of the king of terrors, nor the executioner that thirsted for blood, could rob them of their peace. They looked upon these as messengers sent by Providence, to carry them to that better world where their hearts longed to be. This was the armour by which the saints and martyrs, overcame the world; by which they triumphed over pain, and ignominy, and death, and looked upon fires, and racks, and gibbets, upon every engine of torture, and every form of dissolution, as so many doors opening into the kingdom of glory. They were invincible, because they knew they were immortal.

From the doctrines which have been now laid down, let us conclude with some inferences and reflections.

Christians, you are the disciples of a risen Redeemer. As we glory in his cross and passion, let us also rejoice in his resurrection. The disciples were glad when they saw their Lord restored to life again; and the first Christians considered it as such a joyful event, that they used to greet one another with this saluta-

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tion, "Christ is risen." He who was once dead is now alive, and lives for evermore. He hath removed the terror and the sting of death; he hath hallowed the grave as a place of rest for all his followers, and risen as the Forerunner of the faithful, who shall rise to eternal life. He left the vestments of mortality behind him. Death hath no more dominion. And if ye be risen with Christ, put off the old man and his affections; let sin have no more dominion over you; walk in newness of life. As you have set out in the paths of righteousness, continue your course therein. Religion was not intended for extraordinary occasions. Holiness is not a robe which you can put off and on at pleasure. You must never lay aside the wedding-garment. Transient emotions which you may now feel, will not change the heart. Starts and sallies of goodness which you may now experience, will not form the character. The temper of the mind, and the tenor of the life are all in all. When religion and virtue have been matured by time, and grown into habit, then we can pronounce them to be sincere and genuine. Let him that is righteous then, be righteous still. Let him that is holy, be holy still. Let the spirit of this day accompany you all the days of your lives. Carry into the world, into the business, and into the pleasures of the world, the purity of this ordinance, the dispositions you now feel, and the purposes you now form. Be faithful unto death, and God will give you the crown of life.

Farther, as ye have gained the victory over death, through our Lord Jesus Christ, therefore be assured, that a life of faith and duty will effectually conduct you to happiness. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Miserable, indeed, would be the condition of the human kind; feeble would be our efforts, and few our attainments, if, after a well-ordered life, we were obliged to sit down with the sad confession, that virtue was but

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an empty name; that we had cleansed our hands in vain, and purified our hearts to no purpose. But, Christians, our labour shall not be in vain; our works of faith and love, our exertions of magnanimity, our efforts of patience in the cause of goodness; the tender offices of humanity, charity, and pity, that we have performed, the kind dispositions that we have cherished or improved, the upright intentions which we have maintained, even the silent aspirations of a good heart, the warm wishes of the benevolent, for the happiness of the human kind, are now well pleasing in the sight of God. We know, even from our own experience, that there is a reward for the righteous. Never have we done a good deed, but we have obtained the gratulations of our own conscience, and enjoyed the triumph of the mind.

Let the wicked call upon the mountains to overwhelm, and the rocks to hide them in the day of the Lord. Let infidels look for the shades of annihilation to conceal them, and the curtains of the dark night to be drawn around them for ever. Better prospects are presented to us. The hope of immortality is set before us, and heaven opens its everlasting gates to receive us to its mansions.

Because of this our heart is glad, and our glory rejoiceth. The Everlasting Father will not leave us in the grave, nor suffer his holy ones to see corruption. He hath shewed us the path of life. In his presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Know then thyself, O man! make thyself acquainted with thy future state. Enter early, my brethren, upon your eternal life; and now think, and act, and live, as the heirs of immortality. Implore the Divine goodness to give you the spirit of that better country to which you tend, and to bless you with a foretaste of the joys which are to come. And in the strength of Heaven, go forth from this assembly, immortal; go forth into the world the sons of God, the heirs of heaven, candidates for a crown of glory which fadeth not away. Then you

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will have good cause to remember this day, as one of the days of the right hand of the Most High, and to endless ages you will bless the time when retired from the vanities of the world, and learned to meditate at your Saviour's tomb.

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

PRAYER.

"FOLLOW now, O God, with thy blessing, the whole solemn service of this day. Accept of the praises, and hear the humble prayers of thy people. Our souls would again bless thee, O Lord: all that is within us would magnify thy holy name; for thou hast forgiven our iniquities, healed our diseases, redeemed our lives from destruction, and crowned us with loving-kindness and with tender mercies. Adored be that Providence which hath watched over us ever since we had a being. Thou wast the guardian and protector of our tender years; Thou didst supply our wants, before we knew how to express them to thee in prayer: thou didst distinguish us with thy love, before we knew that liberal hand from which our blessings flowed. Thy good Providence has brought us up hitherto: Thou hast kept our feet from falling, and our eyes from tears: Thou hast not been far off when trouble was near, nor like an absent friend to the distressed. Thou hast given songs to us in the night of adversity.

"Above all thy mercies, we thank thee for eternal life, through Jesus Christ. Glory to God in the highest, for peace proclaimed on earth, and good-will to the children of men. We thank thee for the divine doctrines which he taught, for his meritorious life, for his atoning death, for his glorious ascension

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into heaven, and his prevailing intercession for us within the vail.

"While we enjoy the blessings of the Gospel, may we improve them. Let it not be our condemnation, that when the light hath come into the world, we have loved darkness rather than light; but having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come, may we purify ourselves from the pollutions of the world, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. May we live blameless and harmless in the world, as the children of God, in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation. Among men may our light so shine, that they seeing our good works, may glorify thee also, our Father which art in heaven. May we put on, as the dearly beloved of the Lord, bowels of compassion and mercy: forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us. While yet on earth, may our conversation be in heaven. May we run our Christian race with patience, and with cheerfulness, pressing forward to the mark set before us, as heirs of immortality, and candidates for a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

We would again humbly offer up our prayers, in behalf of these our native lands. We would again pray for thy blessing upon our King, and Queen, and Royal Family. Extend thy favour to all ranks, of men, and conditions of life among us.

"We offer up our prayers for the whole churches of Christianity, and for all the race of man. Spread the knowledge of the faith further and further over the world. We implore thy favour in behalf of the dark corners of the earth, on which the light from heaven hath not yet shone. May the Day-spring from on high visit them, and the Sun of righteousness arise over their heads. Give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. May a light arise in the regions of darkness, and the dry and parched land become as a field which the Lord hath blessed. Thou hast

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brought a vine to us from Judah: Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it: Thou hast caused it to take deep root, and to fill our lands: The boughs thereof are like the cedars of God. Do not suffer its fences to be broken down, nor let the evil one lay it waste. Return, return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts, and behold and visit again thy vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch thou hast made strong for thyself. Extend its boughs over the whole earth, that its leaves may be for the healing of all people: That nations yet undiscovered, and ages yet unborn, may rejoice in its shade!

"Father of all mercies, God of all grace! visit the sick and the afflicted. Let the sighs of the prisoner come up before thee: Look down with pity on the afflictions of the just; bend thine ear to the groans of the unhappy. We pray for the whole human race, the distressed and fallen family of man; once formed after thy image, destined to glory, honour, and immortality, but now defaced with guilt, debased with ignorance, subjected to slavery, and appointed unto death. Let them know Jesus, whom to know is eternal life. Sow the seeds of virtue and happiness every where. May the blood of Christ which was shed upon Mount Calvary, atone for a whole guilty world. May the rays of the Sun of righteousness dissipate as one vast cloud, the collected sins of humanity!

"May cruelty, bigotry, and wrath, be no more: May the rod of the oppressor be broken, and the sword of persecution sheathed. Come down as in the times of old, put on thy robe of vengeance, and deliver the innocent from the hands of the destroyer; may the benign genius of Christianity appear in the lives of all its professors, that the heart may be opened, that amiable virtue may appear again, that man may become a friend to man, and the earth resemble heaven.

"We offer up our prayers in behalf of those mise-

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rable men who have abandoned themselves to wickedness and impiety. O most merciful God! give them not over to final reprobation: Cast them not off for ever. Pour down upon them the influences of thy Spirit, to melt their hearts of stone; to turn them unto the wisdom of the just, before the day of grace expire, and the gates of Heaven be shut, never to be opened again.

"May we, all of us this day depart from thy courts with deep and solemn impressions upon our minds, never to be effaced! Keep, O God, keep our feet from falling! With desiring eyes we look forward to the glory which is to be revealed: and we rejoice in the happy immortality of the redeemed from among men. And now what wait we for but thy blessing. Bless us, O our God, and be with us for ever and ever. *Amen.*"

HYMN V.

1 THE hour of my departure's come;
I hear the voice that calls me home;
At last, O Lord! let trouble cease,
And let thy servant die in peace.

2 The race appointed I have run;
The combat's o'er; the prize is won;
And now my witness is on high,
And now my record's in the sky.

3 Not in mine innocence I trust;
I bow before thee in the dust;
And through my Saviour's blood alone
I look for mercy at thy throne.

4 I leave the world without a tear,
Save for the friends I held so dear;
To heal their sorrows, Lord, descend,
And to the friendless prove a friend.

5 I come, I come, at thy command,
I give my spirit to thy hand;
Stretch forth thine everlasting arms,
And shield me in the last alarms!

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6 The hour of my departure's come,
I hear the voice that calls me home ;
Now, O my God ! let trouble cease,
Now let thy servant die in peace.

Blessing.

" May the love of God the Father, the grace of our " Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the fellowship and " communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you, and all " the people of God, henceforth and for evermore. " Amen."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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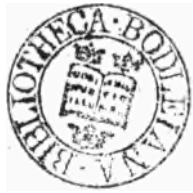

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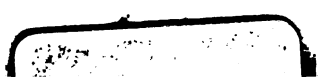

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